

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. BLR 727 Copyright No.

Shelf L4

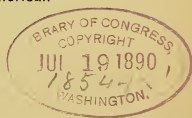
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



LETTERS
TO
GOLIATH OF GAS,

BETTER KNOWN IN MODERN TIMES
AS
ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Having Special Reference to the Letters of Dr. Field and
Col. Ingersoll, Published in the North American
Review in the Years 1887-8.



17
1732
BY JOHN LELLYETT,
Of the Nashville Bar.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.
BARBEE & SMITH, AGENTS, NASHVILLE, TENN.
1890.

BL2727
.L4

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1890,
BY JOHN LELLYETT,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PREFACE.

ADAPTED FROM THE HEBREW OF SAMUEL.

AND there went out a champion, out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had a helmet of brass upon his head; and the brass covered his face. And he was clothed with a coat of mail; and the weight thereof was *five thousand shekels of brass*. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a gorget of brass between his shoulders. And from within him came a stream of gas, burning with fire. The sound thereof was like thunder, and its flame as lightning. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And one (*the North American Review*) *bearing a shield*, went before him.

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Am I not a Philistine, and ye the servants of Fear? Behold I come to drive Fear out of the world! And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight

together. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself many days.

And David took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook; and his sling was in his hand. And the Philistine said, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a staff and with stones? And the Philistine cursed him by his gods. (Sam. xvii.)

NOTE.

These letters were written in 1888; and though containing matter of more general application, relate specially to the letters of Ingersoll and Dr. Field, published about that time in the *North American Review*.

THE AUTHOR.

Nashville, May, 1890.

LETTERS TO INGERSOLL.

(5)

FIRST LETTER.



To ROBERT G. INGERSOLL :

FORASMUCH as several men of distinction have from time to time entered into public controversy with you, in respect to the truth of the Revelation which Christians receive as the Word of God, I have thought proper to give my opinion also. This I do with the more boldness because it seems to me that a voice should be heard from the undistinguished people of no reputation—of whom I may claim to be a representative man—concerning questions which are of as much importance to us as to philosophers, doctors of divinity, jurists, and statesmen.

I recognize in your various publications, oral and written, a “something without form and void,” over which broods the darkness of chaos, but gleaming from that gloom the light-

ning flashes of the storms which agitate the bosom of confusion—

Yet from those flames no light,
But rather darkness, visible.

And yet methinks that these “tumultuous utterances” of yours do better represent the popular thought of skepticism than the more deliberate and orderly writings of graver and more thoughtful unbelievers. The works of these latter stand as over against the books of systematic theology. They speak the mind of the few, and are read, understood, and appreciated by the few. They are calm, profound, dry, passionless. Your palaver finds its opposite in the emotional religion of the enthusiasts, the eloquent appeals of the revivalists and emotional preachers, the tears of the mourners, and the rejoicings of new converts. If Satan desire to project a set-off to every new method of the cause of salvation, Colonel Ingersoll would make an unequaled commander of a Damnation Army. Many of your sayings have one element of true poetry: they give utterance to sentiments “so often

felt, but ne'er so well expressed " by the Tom, Dick, and Harry of skepticism. Neither of these is capable to launch upon the intellectual ocean a theodicy or an atheodicy. Their brains are not made that way. Nor can they read such things. They can read your chaotic lightnings, simply because they are without system or coherency, and are chiefly the poetic utterances of the suggestions of Satan already impressed upon their wandering minds.

Whether you be regarded as a sage philosopher or as a philosophical boxer, the John L. Sullivan of an intellectual prize ring, and the *North American Review* as the Richard K. Fox of the philosophical sport—your utterances are not to be despised. They are exercising a potential influence for good or evil. Your teaching is offered and received as a gospel by many who have souls to be saved or lost—lives in this world worth saving for the good, even if this world were all.

You proclaim it as a gospel when you say:

My object is to drive fear out of the world. Fear is the jailer of the mind. Christianity, superstition—that is

to say, the supernatural—makes every brain a prison, and every soul a convict.

Before we bid a final farewell to the fears which have been keeping our company from the cradle hitherto, and which have walked with our fathers in all the days of their pilgrimage, let us examine your gospel—your statements of fact, whether you can be relied on for accuracy of fact; and your reasonings, whether they be wise or foolish, sane or insane. No magnanimous teacher will decline such examination. No sensible disciple will sit at the feet of a master who cannot stand such scrutiny.

In the beginning of your first letter to Dr. Field, you say:

It is not often that a minister of the gospel of universal benevolence speaks of an unbeliever except in terms of reproach, contempt, and hatred.

Is this true or false? It is no trifling matter, but one of the utmost gravity. If true, it is a great scandal to the religion these ministers of the gospel profess and to the com-

munity over which Christ is supposed to have set them as overseers. Is it true? I shall presume you do not go often to Church. If you did go at all, you would hear the unbeliever spoken of and spoken to: often in terms of kindness and love, generally in terms of pity, very seldom in terms of hatred and contempt. The rule will be found the same in the writings of Christian ministers. This is only an assertion of mine, in reply to an assertion of yours, but with this advantage: I have been there much; you, but little. Those who go there will agree with me; those who do not go may some of them agree with you. You are a lawyer; and as such may decide for yourself at least which class of witnesses, if equally honest and capable, may claim the greater credit.

But your manner indicates that you thought you were uttering a truth which would scarcely be questioned. How did you fall into such a mistake? The world, brave Colonel, is a great mirror. Smile upon it, and it smiles upon you. Frown answers to frown. The tiger

inside the glass will swing his tail just like the tiger on the outside. And if the outside tiger essay to spring upon the other, his shadowy antagonist will meet him half-way. It is a gallery of echoes. Sing in it sweet songs of love, and it replies in multiplied strains of kindness. Pour out volumes of blasphemy, and pandemonium dins your ears in response. May you not, in the ecstasy of genius, have been studying your own shadow and listening to the echoes of your own voice?

You say to Dr. Field:

The statement of your letter, that some of your brethren look upon me as a monster, on account of my unbelief, tends to show that those who love God are not always the friends of their fellow-men.

Is this good reasoning? In the first place, if a man were to see a horse normally formed, but twenty hands high, he would look upon that horse as a monster. Yet he would not hate the horse for his monstrosity, whether the man love God or not. But you may conceive that Dr. Field intended a *hateful*

monster. Let us try you on a larger point. You further inquire:

Is it not strange that people who admit that they ought to be eternally damned, etc., can be so arrogantly egotistic as to look upon others as monsters?

This is not a very small point, for it is an imputation of arrogant egotism. Are you in the palace of mirrors again? But, good logician, is it either arrogant or egotistic to look upon another being as a monster or as any thing else? I might regard you as a monster, and flee from you. That would not be arrogant, and though I might be taking care of the *ego*, I would not be asserting him. It would not be egotistic. He who looks upon another as a monster may think himself a pigmy. No; there is no suggestion of arrogance or egotism in the fact that one looks upon another as a monster. This, which you offer as something in the nature of argument, is only a blast for the gallery of echoes.

But suppose some of the people do look upon you as a monster, is not that a matter of

opinion, with which their friendly or unfriendly feelings have nothing to do? You say:

Th etruth is that no one can be justly held responsible for his thoughts. The brain thinks without asking our consent. We believe or we disbelieve, without an effort of the will. Belief is a result. It is the effect of evidence upon the mind. The scales turn in spite of him who watches. There is no opportunity of being honest or dishonest in the formation of an opinion. *The conclusion is entirely independent of desire.*

Why, then, do you complain if some people regard you as a monster? You say that it "tends to show that those who love God are not always the friends of their fellow-men." You mean that their belief is the result of their unfriendly feelings—that their head has followed their heart. You forget so soon that "no one can be justly held responsible for his thoughts;" that "the brain thinks without asking our consent;" that "we believe or we disbelieve, without an effort of the will." My good and logical sir, "belief is a result." Remember that "there is no opportunity of being honest or dishonest in the formation of

an opinion." Do not forget that "the conclusion is *entirely* independent of desire." Yet you speak of these "brethren" very sarcastically; and evidently intend that if they love God they ought to love you. This may be true. But you also mean that if they love you they would not look upon you as a monster—meaning of the hateful sort. I quote but little of what you say in caustic derision of the assumed hypocrisy of these lovers of God who are supposed to hate Ingersoll. You come at them on one side and on another; and you lash them with a whip of scorpions on all sides because they regard Ingersoll as a monster. You hold them responsible for their belief. Dear brother in error, "belief is a result," a "conclusion entirely independent of desire." At least you say so. And elsewhere you solemnly profess your faith that "that which happens must happen." Why, then, do you kick against the goads?

But in spite of your philosophy of belief, which I have just been quoting and applying, I must fall back to your first position, and

agree with you that if these Christian lovers of God also loved Ingersoll this would incline them not to look upon him as a hateful monster. Their love for Ingersoll would have such an influence on "the brain that thinks without asking our consent," that like Brother Field, they would not look upon Ingersoll as a monster of wickedness, to be hated. Are you not mistaken about the brain thinking without our consent? The brain may break away, or be broken away from our control once in awhile; but the heart has no servant more docile than the brain. I doubt if any man's opinion of any other man will be favorable, if hatred toward that person be the feeling of the heart.

And this, good sir, makes me think an evil thought concerning yourself. I say "Get thee hence, Satan," but he will not hence. Charity, that thinketh no evil, stands aside; and the imp still whispers in my ear. You hate Jehovah, as you so freely declare; and I find you look upon him as a monster—a hateful monster. But if you loved Jehovah,

would not Ingersoll soon find that the image of the monster had faded from his mind? You think those who look upon you as a monster, entertain such opinions, because they are "not friends of their fellow-men," meaning that they hate you. May they not as well say that Ingersoll looks upon Jehovah as a monster because he hates Jehovah? But you will say you hate Jehovah because he is a monster, and may they not say that they do not love Ingersoll because he is a monster? Do those brethren hate Ingersoll because they look upon him as a monster? or do they look upon him as a monster because they hate him? You evidently assume that they look upon Ingersoll as a monster because they hate him. And however the fact may be, I think you here take a good view of the philosophy of belief. Considering the brilliant genius, and aggressive and denunciatory manner of Ingersoll, I believe that as a rule those men who hate him will look upon Ingersoll as a monster. He is no pigmy or commonplace man. If they hate him, that feeling of the heart will

so influence the thinking of the brain that ninety-nine out of every hundred will look upon him as a monster. I mean that as a rule the head follows the heart far more than the heart follows the head.

It has been said that "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." And if you so judge these brethren, that the cause of their unfavorable opinion of you is to be found in their hearts, then this scripture is fulfilled when the brethren judge that the cause of Ingersoll's unfavorable opinion of the God of the Christian and his religion is to be found in the heart of Ingersoll.

In deciding the question, then, between you and yourself, I must hold that you are about right when you judge that men who look upon you as a monster of evil because of your unbelief, as a rule are led to such opinion, in part at least, by the unfriendly feelings of their hearts. In spite of whatever better reasons they have, if they loved you, that love would reverse or modify their opinion. And I hold that you are mistaken, in the other place,

when you say that the mental "conclusion is *entirely* independent of desire." This is error, and this error is the cause of many errors.

You say to Dr. Field:

You must know that perfectly honest men differ on many important subjects. Some believe in free trade, and others are the advocates of protection. There are honest Democrats and sincere Republicans. How do you account for these differences?

Well, in large part thus: The importer desires more commerce with foreign countries. His thinking brain follows the desire of his heart, and he believes in free trade. The whisky monopolist desires the perpetuation of the internal revenue system for its advantages to him. The head follows the heart, and he believes in the policy of collecting less by the tariff, that the necessity of collecting by the internal revenue system may continue. The manufacturer desires protection, therefore he believes in protection. The conclusion of the mind is not "*entirely independent of desire,*" but seems generally controlled by the desire in all these cases. You immediately continue:

Educated men, Presidents of colleges, cannot agree upon questions capable of solution—questions that the mind can grasp, concerning which the evidence is open to all, and where the facts can with accuracy be ascertained. How do you explain this?

I explain it by saying that human reason is not to be relied on, even in respect to “questions which the mind can grasp, concerning which the evidence is open to all, and where the facts can with accuracy be ascertained;” for some of these great minds must be in error. And then I take a lesson from this observation, and say that we cannot know the truth in respect to the things of God which are the subjects of what we call revelation, unless God reveal them to us in such manner that we may receive them by what we call faith. We find that we cannot depend on our reason; for the opinions of “honest Democrats and sincere Republicans” are generally found running in the direction of their personal interests, the solemn judgments of supreme judges are swayed by the influence of their hearts, and Presidents of colleges cannot

agree upon easy questions, even where the heart is indifferent to the result.

How then shall God, if there is a God, reveal himself to man in such manner that man may know that it is God who speaks? Shall it be through a subtle philosophy which only the wise and understanding can look into? Then even the few could not agree about it. And as for the many, they could receive the revelation at all, correctly or incorrectly, only by faith in the teachings of the few; and as the few would not agree, whom should the many believe? Some unbelievers complain of the paucity of evidence, saying if there is a God and he would reveal himself to man, why does he not show forth such signs and wonders, and in a manner so unquestionable that none can doubt? They would have a revelation of such a nature that "the wayfaring man though a fool, need not err therein." And then when we tell them that the average human being is no wiser than this wayfaring fool in respect to the abstractions of philosophy, and that yet by his instinct and his hum-

bler intelligence he has, over all the world and over all the ages, believed in a God or in a plurality of gods, the average infidel finds nothing in this even tending to prove that there is a supernatural power. Jesus gave thanks to his Father that he has "hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them unto babes"—that is, to the unwise, who are quite incapable of philosophical research. I reckon this is the only way God could make his revelation so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein. The peasant, when you ask him for the *internal* evidences of his religion, puts his hand upon his heart. He does not understand your language exactly. That is the only way God can give it to him, so far as I know. The peasant cannot reason it out. He may hear you, and hear me, and hear the preacher. But how can he tell which of us speaks the truth, or that either of us does so? God must reveal the truth to his heart, to his instincts, to his inner consciousness, or the truth can never be known to the wayfaring simple one.

But when Christ speaks of "these things being *hidden* from the wise and understanding" it should by no means be taken to imply that this class of his creatures may not *find* these hidden things. "The Jew that requires a sign, and the Greek that seeks after wisdom"—these may both find the thing they require and seek after. But they find by their respective methods what God has revealed to the babe. As God has not given the searching power and opportunity to the many, he has given them the revelation without it. How can your little children, and youth, and the mass of mankind, enter into an examination of what we commonly call the evidences of religion or revelation?

Whether or not God has made a revelation to man by signs and wonders, and whether or not he still continues to reveal himself to mankind, are questions of fact for the jury; and not chiefly questions of law for the court. I do not fully know how you argue the case; but some of your brethren, if agnostics have brethren, argue these questions in a manner

we do not allow in the court-house. On the question, Has God made a revelation to man? they do not call witnesses, but say we must first ascertain whether there is a God. For, say they, if there is no God, then he could make no revelation. And as we cannot know with certainty of the existence of a God without revelation, their method places them behind a door that closes from within. The more they press against it the more firmly are they shut up, the more effectually do they shut out from their dungeon the light of the sun which lighteth the world without. Man cannot know the sun but by the revelation he makes to man. We know the sun by his revelation; and do not inquire first whether there is a sun—saying, “for if there is no sun, we cannot receive light from him.”

But I perceive you have finally made a confession of faith. At one time you approach it with questioning hesitation, thus:

Is it not possible that we may find that every thing has been necessarily produced? This, of course, would end in the justification of men. Is not that a desir-

able thing? Is it not possible that intelligence may at last raise the human race to that sublime and philosophic height?

Then again you confess your faith positively thus:

Starting from the same declaration, that man does as he must, I reach the conclusion that we shall finally perceive in this fact justification for every individual.

You again proceed cautiously as follows:

Is there not room for a better, a higher philosophy? After all, is it not possible that we may find that every thing has been necessarily produced—that all religions, and superstitions, and mistakes, and all crimes, were simply necessities? Is it not possible that out of this perception may come not only love and pity for others, but absolute justification for the individual? May we not find that every soul has, like Mazeppa, been lashed to the wild horse of passion, or like Prometheus, to the rocks of fate?

Finally you give us this positive confession:

I do not believe that I am the sport of accident, or that I may be dashed to pieces by the blind agency of nature. There is no accident, and there is no agency. That which happens must happen. The present is the child of all the past, the mother of all the future.

The last-quoted paragraph may be taken as

the conclusion of the whole matter. I confess the puzzle when I attempt to parse its several sentences. When you say "that which happens must happen," it seems clear that you are a fatalist. But when you say "I do not believe that I may be dashed to pieces by the blind agency of nature"—and "there is no accident"—what can this mean? "Blind" agency of nature must mean *unintelligent* agency of nature. This is the sense in which philosophers use the word *blind*, when applied thus. You must mean that you do not believe you may be destroyed or injured, or that any thing shall happen to you by the unintelligent agency of nature. We will assume that you believe a man may be struck by lightning or dashed even to pieces by a whirlwind. You put the ego for the man. You do not believe that a man may be destroyed by an unintelligent agency of nature. We will not suppose you think the wind or lightning, or other such element or force is intelligent; for then what agency of nature would we call blind or unintelligent? You say "there is no agency,"

but let us use the word *agency* for convenience. If the agency—the wind or lightning—is not intelligent, and you may be destroyed by this means, and yet not by a blind agency, then this must be because there is behind or above the agency, and controlling it, a something else which really does the act, using the wind or lightning as means; and this something must not be blind, but intelligent. Otherwise you certainly may be dashed to pieces by a blind (unintelligent) force of nature, call it by what name you choose. You see how the agency of logic itself (blind or intelligent) brings you perforce into the very presence of God. If you do not see that it brings you, *ex necessitate*, into the presence of intelligence which moves the elements, the blindness must be within you.

You say: "There is no accident, and there is no agency." Let us see if in this you are not thinking something which is unthinkable. What meaning shall we attach to your words? A humorous friend of mine started in business, bravely saying: "There is no such word

as fail." When soon thereafter he failed he explained that his meaning was that there was no such word as *phail*, but spelled with an *f* he would not deny the word. Your ready humor may dispose of the words *accident* and *agency* in a similar manner. But without a definition differing from that generally received your statement is contradictory. In philosophy, an accident is that which takes place without an efficient intelligent cause—without design. You say there is no such thing as that—"there is no accident." It would follow, that nothing happens without design—without an intelligent cause. But if you modify the definition so as to leave out intelligence, then your saying is that nothing happens without a cause, and we need not send to a distance for an intelligence which can say that. But your private definition of the word *accident* would be like my friend's spelling of the word *fail*. You are writing to English-speaking people, and we use the word *accident* to express our idea of something which happens (or is supposed to happen)

without purpose or design, which implies intelligence. "No accident, and no agency." An agent, if intelligent, is one who acts, either for himself or another; or we may speak of an act being done by the agency of some unintelligent thing, used by an intelligent actor. *Agency* implies the operation of intelligence, as *accident* excludes the idea of intentional operation. When you say there is no accident it implies that nothing is done without intelligent design; and when you say there is no agency it implies that all things happen without intelligent design.

When you say there is no agency you assert that nothing is done by an intelligent being, either immediately, or mediately by the operation of means used by that intelligence. But we know there is such a thing as intelligence, just as we know we exist. It seems to all men that intelligence is a factor, and has been a factor, in bringing to pass some of the things which happen. You must mean that this seeming is an illusion; that intelligence, while it thinks it is playing a part in

the happenings of history, is in fact only being played a part in these happenings, by something not intelligent which moves it. While the Calvinist conceives that the primal cause which operates all things to certain results is intelligent, you conceive that cause or those causes to be without intelligence. Yet you do not believe you may be dashed to pieces by the blind agency of nature.

The assumption of the fatalist is that there inhere in the nature of things causes which must of necessity produce certain effects. Effects become causes, and there are conflicting causes; but the conflict becomes combination, producing causes still certain in their effects. If we conceive or speak of a will, it is only the result of causes producing that will—is in fact not a will, but only an illusion. Suppose an intelligence knowing all causes, and foreseeing all effects, and the effects of these effects, as they become causes, and so *ad infinitum*, this might be the fatalist's god; but he would have no power to change the inherent certainty of things, no power at all.

He would not be omnipotent, but absolutely impotent. There would still be nothing contingent in the absolute sense. To my very finite apprehension, (which I thus expose) this kind of a god would be as useful, and practically the same as the God of the Calvinist, if he has from all eternity bound his almighty power and all things by absolute predestination.

There is still another conception of God, which considers him as foreseeing all things from all eternity which shall ever come to pass; but that he has not fore-ordained all things—only foresees them. And I am no more able than the skeptic to conceive how the practical situation is bettered by this explanation. Neither of these conceptions of God is sustained by any thing in what believers receive as the word or revelation of God. The Bible nowhere tells us that God has predestinated all things or that he foresees all things.

Now is the fatalistic idea consistent with the orthodox agnostic method? The agnostic says: "There are some things I know in spite of my name. There are some things I believe

upon observation, which yet I may not say I know. And for the rest I may predicate nothing. I know that I am, because I am conscious of it. I know there exists a universe in motion, because I observe it. I observe the motions of the universe, and thereupon I form in my mind certain beliefs." The liberal agnostic has faith to rely with care upon the observations of others. But beyond what he perceives and observes, and what he believes has been observed, no orthodox agnostic will predicate any thing as knowledge. Well, as an agnostic, I perceive that I have intelligence, and I observe the manifestations of intelligence in others. The intelligence which I perceive and observe is an attribute of a personal being. I have no knowledge of intelligence existing otherwise. If it lies about loose, or floats in the elements, we have no information of such fact. The existence of intelligence without a personal being in which it inheres, is not only unknown, but unthinkable. I further observe that intelligence is able to set in motion causes which produce

effects, certain in a sense either absolute or qualified. I observe that intelligence is able to interfere with the blind or unintelligent forces of nature, so as to change the certainty, or make uncertain the effects of these causes. The blind agency of nature which would, without such interference, "dash me in pieces," is made harmless by the interference of intelligence. When we seek to know the primal cause of any effect, we trace it either to the will of an intelligent being, or else we cannot find its first cause. You may say that when we have traced the effect back to the will of intelligence we still have not found the primal cause; that volition or will is the effect of some other cause or causes, leading us still to the unknown. But this is at best only conjecture—not perception or observation. It is in contradiction of perception and observation. I say that all effects which are traced to primal cause are traced to intelligence; and that when you reach as cause the will of intelligent being you have found primal cause, so far as perception and observation can

proceed. Back of this can be nothing better than conjecture, contradicting the results of scientific observation. The agnostic dare not more than say: "I do not know."

The agnostic also knows by his own consciousness that he has volition or will—that this will is free. It may be induced, but not absolutely controlled, by motives. When I say that though a motive induces me to rise to my feet, yet I can remain sitting, that the consent of my will must first be obtained—that the initiative *inheres* in my will—I state a proposition which extends to all cases, however extreme. A threat to take my life may prevail to induce me to give my money to a robber, but this is only because my will prefers to surrender the money rather than risk my life. It requires but little reflection to perceive that even in this extreme case my hand does not move, my person does not act, until my will directs the action. I am conscious that my will still has the power (abstractly) to refuse. And so long as my will does not consent, does not dictate the motion, my body

does not move. That which I perceive in myself I observe (though imperfectly) in others. This is as far as perception and observation can go, and may be called science. All beyond this is at best only conjecture, not science or knowledge.

Conjectures of unknowable things may be true or false. We cannot know. But plausible conjecture follows on in the direction which science has pursued to the limit of knowledge. The agnostic who says, "I do not believe that there is a God, or that there is no God—I do not know," has less excuse for assuming that the will is not free, but only the effect of motives. To the extent of his conscious perception, he knows that his own will is free. To the extent of his observation, the indications are that the will of others is like his own. A will that is only the effect of motives is no volition or will. Hence the Bible, very remarkably—written in fragments through so many ages, by so many different hands—scarcely ever speaks of a free will, but of the will.

So, then, inasmuch as we find the will, which is an attribute of intelligence, is the only initiative cause—the starting-point in causation, so far as we can know by perception, or have scientific ground for belief through observation—it is plausible conjecture at least that all things which happen are caused by the will of intelligence, as proximate or remote cause. Accident would be included in the latter. We may reasonably believe, not absolutely but as plausible, that those things the initiative cause of which we cannot find in the will of any known intelligence, are caused by the will of unknown intelligence—not excluding the possibility of accident. If we proceed farther, and conjecture the existence of one supreme intelligent Being, it does not follow that his will is the initiative or first cause of all things which happen; because he may have power to create, and may have created, other intelligent beings who have wills given or imparted by him, but wills of their own, which we call free wills. We here arrive again in the field of science. We know that

there are such beings, just as we know there are beings at all. There can be no such thing as moral qualities, unless there is a will in the constitution of intelligent beings not dominated by motives, but dominating motives.

So when you say "that which happens must happen" you contradict your own perceptions and observations; for these tell you the fact is the reverse. And your better sense acts upon it when you denounce any kind of infamy or wickedness. Men whose minds have become unscrewed in some part, so as to believe either with the fatalist or Calvinist, only think that they so believe. The necessary consequence of the postulate "that every thing has been necessarily produced," is the *justification* of all things. Jesus Christ himself would be entitled to no more credit in respect to his life and death, and all that he was and is, than Caiaphas who demanded or Pilate who ordered the crucifixion, or Judas who was the betrayer. We have an intuitive apprehension that this is not true. You will agree with me, I presume, that in-

gratitude and cruelty and treachery and undue selfishness are wrong; and that the devotion of self to the well-being of others, and faithful devotion to friends, and gratitude and mercy and justice and honor and truth are right. You are extreme in your criticism and denunciation of hypocrisy, cruelty, intolerance and tyranny. There can be no consistency in this if "that which happens must happen." This figment of the supposed belief of your brain is negated by your wiser instinct. You say that Dr. Field "will admit that he who now persecutes for opinion's sake is infamous." Why so, if "that which happens must happen," and if, as you say again, "that which must be has the right to be?" Can right be infamous? To quote you again, "beyond this, inconsistency cannot go." Why speak with abhorrence of the cruel tortures of the Inquisition, and the wicked slaughter of millions of human beings by wars, by religious persecutions, and by ambitious lust of power? What of all these, if that which happens must happen, and that which must

be has a right to be? And what of all the cruelty, wickedness, and meanness of all the intelligent beings in the universe, if that which happens must happen, and that which must be has a right to be?

You say you do not know whether there is a God or not, but you make no exception in respect to the God that may be when you say "that which happens must happen." So, then, if there is a God, he is subject to the same law of fate. Yet the ink does not dry on this confession of your faith, with the candid declaration that this must result in the justification of every individual, before you break forth again, page after page, in the most denunciatory condemnation of things which have happened, must have happened, and therefore have a right to happen. Do you denounce the right? or is the right wrong? No; you do not believe what you think you believe.

Neither does your brother, the Calvinist, believe what he thinks he believes. He imagines that he believes that God has predesti-

nated from all eternity all things which ever come to pass or happen. But he prays to his God all the same, as if his prayers must not, of course, be in vain. He is conscious, too, that he can pray or refrain from praying. His instinct is wiser than his reason.

But there is one essential point of inconsistency, in which you and the Calvinist agree. Cain killed Abel, they say, and you will admit that Guiteau killed Garfield. Questions of sanity aside, still as the Calvinist says, God predestinated both these murders; so that you and he agree that Cain and Guiteau could not help it. It was God or fate that did the deeds. But when the punishments (of the Calvinistic creed) or the consequences (of your creed) follow these murders it is Cain that is sent to the land of wandering, and not God or fate; and it is Guiteau that suffers death. In both these cases the innocent suffer. You may impute the deed done to God or fate, but the suffering consequence cannot be got clear of in that way. The man may not be able to *do* for himself, but he must *suf-*

fer for himself. That is a thing he can realize without any mystification. I rather guess you will take the part of Cain as against Abel, on religious grounds; but granting Guiteau's sanity, you will not say he was unjustly punished. No; you are mistaken about your belief. Your instinct contradicts your reason, and your instinct is right.

These contradictions of what men vainly call reason, by a God-given faculty which I here call instinct, are many and common. Reason runs mad, and common sense instinct shoves it aside as a lunatic. If reason will be content to postulate those things only which are known to us, and cease the vain effort to think the unthinkable and know the unknowable, it will find itself in line with the common sense on which we live and act. Common sense tells us that causes originate in the will of intelligence; that volition is not an effect, but is in its essential nature cause. This is the peasant's view of it, whether he can formulate an expression of his conception or not. Though a cause may spring from an effect,

an effect operate as a cause, so that in one sense the same thing may be both an effect and a cause, yet cause as cause is as essentially different from effect as effect as any two things can be. They are logical opposites. Original cause cannot be effect, of course. That would be a contradiction in terms; for if the cause is an effect, it cannot be original cause. Either there is no such thing as original cause, or there must be cause which is not an effect. The cause, then, which is an effect is not in its original nature cause. So of volition or will. To speak of a will which is not free is to speak of a will which is not a will. If the so-called will be the effect of causes or motives outside the intelligence in which it inheres, it is not a will. Will is cause, and there is no cause other than secondary which is not the will of an intelligence, so far as we can perceive and observe.

The notion that causes are without any origin, that all causes are the effects of other causes, running back to all eternity, is a mere fiction of imaginative reason. Our conscious

sense tells us that intelligent will is the origin of causes. It is the same sense which tells us that ingratitude is wrong, and that cruelty is wicked; that mercy is good, and gratitude is right, that there is right and wrong, that we *can* do right and refuse the wrong, that we *can* do wrong and forsake the right.

Reason, when it meekly takes the common sense of mankind as its base of operations, may be able to discover truths unknown to common sense. And it may be able to unveil and make more clear the truths which sense already apprehends. But when reason leaves this base of operations, as a rule it is not reliable. If it tell me there cannot be, and never in the past could have been, a cause without a cause—I have not been there, and nobody has been there to observe, and reason cannot prove its assertion true. If it tell me that every effect must become cause and continue to operate through its effects becoming causes to all eternity—I have not been there, nor has anybody; there can be no observation to prove the assertion; and we can-

not know if it is true. I believe it is false. If reason tell me that when I raise my finger I set in motion a wave of force which must continue to roll on through immensity forever, I incline to think this wisdom is nonsense. No one has been there to see. It cannot be proved positively, whether we can prove its negative or not. If science proceed to divide matter until the scientist can no longer divide it, I am willing to accept its reports of results thus far, because it is observation. But if science or reason assume to tell me that there is such a thing as an indivisible atom—indivisible in an absolute sense—no man ever saw an atom, heard it, or tasted, smelled, or felt an atom; and I can have no assurance that any such thing as an absolutely indivisible atom exists. On the contrary, the plausible conjecture is, if it be not more than conjecture, that the particles of matter are infinitely divisible. If infinity is unthinkable, yet so is the indivisibility of matter unthinkable, however minute the particles.

The unthinkable is only that of which we

cannot conceive. God is no more inconceivable or incomprehensible than immensity and eternity. Yet we know that eternity and immensity are necessarily self-existent. If there were no God or universe, yet there would be eternal time and boundless space.

To think sensibly, we must return to the platform on which Christ Jesus stood when he gave thanks to the Father and Lord of heaven and earth, that he has "hid these things from the wise and understanding," hidden them from the foolishness of the philosophers and scientists, and "revealed them unto babes"—that is, to the common sense of the peasant, and the rest of mankind who are not called "thinkers." We know that we exist, simply because we know it, we have a sense of it. We know there is right and wrong because we have a sense of it. The philosopher and peasant both have intuitive knowledge of both these things. We know it is not true that "all things which happen must happen." We have a sense of it. It would contradict our sense of will and our sense of right and wrong. We

have a sense of inherent will, free in its essential nature. Its freedom cannot be taken away or destroyed without destroying or suspending the will. It is freedom itself. God could not make the will not free. It is a contradiction in terms. We know that will operates as primal cause, because we have a sense of it, just as we have a sense of our existence and of our intelligence. We realize by our inner consciousness that motives and temptations are only inducements. They do not compel the will, but only persuade it. The will can still choose or refuse. Whenever a man becomes unable to do this he is no longer in a normal condition. A compelled will is a contradiction in terms.

The Hindoo metaphysician who denies real existence of any thing but an *idea*, reasons on the same plane with him who denies the existence of a will which can operate as initiative cause. When the great First Cause, which is the will of Supreme Intelligence, creates a being in his own image, and endows that being with intelligent volition, without which the

creature could not bear the image of the Creator, we have a being like God, with a will of his own. Without this there could be no good or evil in morals; there could be no right and wrong; there could be no merit in virtue, no demerit in vice. The question may be: Is it better that the spiritual world should be a mere machine, like the material world, moving only as it is moved; or that it should have a volition to initiate and carry on motion? We conceive that a Creator must of necessity make it (if at all) one way or the other. Which has he done? We may ask the question: *Could* God make a being endowed with volition—not a seeming volition, but real? I conceive that he could. But, on the other hand, we may ask: Could God create or impart spirit to a creature, without a free will? What do we know of spirit? It is intelligent life. Can intelligent life exist without volition as an attribute of its nature? We may conjecture that it could, but this would be no more than conjecture. We do not perceive or observe the existence of any such being.

For all we know, the existence of such ideal being is impossible in the nature of things.

The common sense of mankind, from the ignorant peasant to the most learned philosopher, recognizes the existence of spiritual volition, and of right and wrong, so that even the philosopher who denies it in theory thinks and acts upon it in his life. He thinks it, and talks it, and acts it in spite of the delusion of his imagination. This is the revelation which God makes to the babes. It is not true that whatever happens must happen. There is intelligent agency; and unless all things are caused by intelligent will, there is accident.

You seem opposed to hell—as frantically mad about it—as if your only chance to escape it were to think it out of existence. You protest with all the eloquence of Ingersoll against the hell of Calvin. But who can tell where the blind god of fate will go with us? Something has made us, or else we have got into being without being made at all. It is no more miraculous or incredible or unthinkable for

us to continue in existence, or rise from the dead, than to have come into existence in the first instance. It may be as easy to pass into another existence as to have come into this. I agree with you—not that “there are no rewards and no punishments”—but that both “are consequences.” This is why *belief* is important. Belief produces consequences. Belief induces—not compels—the will of man to do this or that. Hence the consequence of right belief may be right conduct; and the consequence of right conduct may be a happy result; and so on.

But to switch back again onto your main track, though fate makes us do whatever we perform, so that we are not to blame, yet fate brings untold sufferings upon our innocent world as consequences. True, “whatever happens must happen,” but some of these happenings are very hell itself. And you, in your happy method of “driving fear out of the world,” encourage us with the assurance that there can be no pardon. You say, in regard to the hypothesis of a future state:

I have said a thousand times, and I say again,

That we do not know, we cannot say,

Whether death is a wall or a door—

The beginning or end of a day—

The spreading of wings to soar,

Or the folding forever of wings—

The rise or the set of a sun,

Or an endless life that brings,

Rapture and love to every one.

Your view of the present condition of the world under the government of fate is expressed thus:

It seems to me impossible that life should be exceedingly joyous to any one who is acquainted with its miseries, its burdens, and its tears. I know that as darkness follows light around the globe, so misery and misfortune follow the sons of men.

Then you say to Dr. Field, with respect to his God, just what you must say in respect to your own god of fate:

Why should God permit the triumph of injustice? Why should the loving be tortured? Why should the noblest be destroyed? Why should the world be filled with misery, with ignorance, and with want? What reason have you for believing that your God will do better in another world than he has done and is doing

in this? Will he be wiser? Will he have more power? Will he be more merciful?

Perhaps Dr. Field might reply: "My reason for believing that my God will do better in another world than in this is because God has *promised* to do so"—using the word "better" in the sense intended in your question. But what better can we expect of your god of fate? What has he promised? What hope does he hold out to the poor sufferer who is writhing in agony under the consequences of having done what he must have done, and therefore had a right to do? How shall this consolation "drive fear out of the world?"

You say you would console the mother who bends with anxious heart and blinding tears over the grave of her erring and lost son, after this manner:

My dear woman, there are no punishments, there are no rewards—there are consequences; and of one thing you may rest assured, and that is that every soul, no matter what sphere it may inhabit, *will have the everlasting opportunity of doing right.*

Kind in you to say that, just to comfort the

poor mother! But if in this world "that which happens must happen," and every soul does not do right in this world, by what warrant do you promise better regulation or freedom of will in the world to come? But you are kindly using casuistic *finesse* upon the good woman. If the fact be so, that the son she weeps over has seduced and broken the heart of innocence, and then stained his hands in the blood of the heart he has broken, you believe "that which happens must happen," and "that which must be has the right to be." It was therefore right that he should seduce innocence, break the confiding heart, and murder the victim. And the mother may rest assured that every soul will have the everlasting opportunity of doing what he must do. But while you take away the rewards and punishments from the anxious mother's fears, you still leave the consequences. The mother may be aware that her son has been borne to that grave from the gallows, as consequence of the murder he has committed—though "that which happened must have happened,"

and "that which must be has the right to be." What hope can you give us that this cruel fate will be less cruel in another world?

You say, further:

From certain acts flow certain consequences; these consequences increase or decrease the happiness of man; and the consequences must be borne. A man who has forfeited his life to the Commonwealth may be pardoned, but a man who has violated a condition of his own well-being cannot be pardoned—there is no pardoning power. The laws of the State are made, and being made, can be changed; but the facts of the universe cannot be changed. The relation of fact to consequence cannot be altered. This is above all power.

Again, you say:

Whoever commits a crime against another, must, to the utmost of his power in this world, and in another, if there be one, make full and ample restitution, and in addition must bear the natural consequences of his offense.

If he voluntarily "make full and ample restitution," most men would be satisfied with that; and the Christian is taught to forgive him on repentance, whether he be able to make restitution or not. But your doctrine requires

him to bear the natural consequences even if he repent and make full restitution. Revelation *does* teach that there is a Power which *can* release even from the natural consequences. You continue:

No man can be perfectly happy, either in this world or in any other, who has by his perfidy broken a loving and a confiding heart. No power can step between acts and consequences—no forgiveness, no atonement.

Who then, I pray, locks the gates of hell more securely than this against the egress of its prisoners? Your fate is more cruel than the God of the Bible (I do not say the God of Calvin), for our God has granted repentance and forgiveness. The atonement means what its etymology implies. Those who are at variance with God it makes at one with him. If our hearts hate God, the atonement is intended to induce us to love God. To love God is keeping his commandments, loving our fellow-men.

You complain bitterly that you should be judged for your belief. The Bible tells us over and over again that men shall be judged

according to their works, and it never states any thing inconsistent with this, though it is a book of little books, written by the hands of many men, at times extending through many ages. As already hinted, the saving service of belief operates in this life, to save a man from evil works, and to induce him to good works. Thus it promotes his final salvation. And so of atonement, redemption, regeneration, and all the means of salvation. Regeneration is to reverse the natural or acquired inclination of man to do evil and forsake the good. A bad man can do good and refrain from evil; and continuance in such practice will gradually work a change of disposition. But this is an uphill business. As a rule he will not persevere. Revelation teaches that there are many disembodied spirits—spirits which perhaps never had bodies—who are actively engaged in tempting man to evil. And it needs no revelation to tell us that there are many tens of thousands of embodied spirits engaged in the same work, as industriously as any disembodied spirits we

read about. There are embodied spirits also working for the salvation of men, but the better opinion is that the bad embodied spirits are in the majority, and have the advantage otherwise. Revelation offers a divine spiritual influence to help the man who seeks such help. Those who seek this help, as a rule, testify that they receive it. You may say this is delusion, but your assertion is conjecture, arrayed against observation. The full effect of this spiritual power, according to the testimony of those who speak by observation of others, and by perception in themselves, is a change of heart, as they call it. By way of emphasis it is called regeneration, so completely are the affections and spiritual powers of the man changed. This change has its consequences—good works. But after all, at the judgment we have no account of man being examined upon his regeneration, much less his belief. He is not sworn on the state of his heart, as they did sometimes in the war of the rebellion. He is simply judged according to his works. When the apostles tell us

of the saving power of faith it has reference to salvation from sin in this life. When it is written "he that believeth not shall be damned, —or condemned, which is what damned means—or judged, which is perhaps the right translation—it is a warning that unbelief (by one who hears the gospel) will tend to evil works, and so lead to condemnation. We are in a state of condemnation or damnation already, as you testify when you say that "as darkness follows light around the globe, so misery and misfortune follow the sons of men." Nearly all this misery has its first cause in the selfishness of mankind. Unselfishness is its remedy. Revelation teaches us a lesson which is simply divine itself, in its very essence, even if it were not historically true—as it is—that Jesus Christ came into the world to teach man how to cure this damnation, by unselfish devotion to the good of others; and by conformity to his environment, which is the will of God. So the Scripture says: "God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be

saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned"—has found the way of escape from the damnation of "misery and misfortune which follow the sons of men." "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." This is his normal condition, and there is no way to get him out of it, "because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." God cannot help it either. How can he get the man out of this damnation of hell, unless he can get the hell out of the man?

You say somewhere:

The first great step toward national reformation is the universal acceptance of the idea that *there is no escape from the consequences of our acts.*

And again you say:

No power can step between acts and consequences.

The difference between *your* doxy and *orthodoxy* is that yours gives no salvation by any means, while orthodoxy gives one means and only one—"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." To "believe on" him is everywhere

in Scripture put for acceptance and adoption by the man, of the plan of salvation offered by the Son whom God sent into the world to save it from its damned condition. That plan is a plan of causes and effects, and leads and helps him to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." If a man do not believe, he is not likely to accept and adopt this plan, and there is no other way to save him. Condemnation is his present condition; and if his future damnation be not a "consequence," it is for the want of a consequence. He is simply left as he is. Hence the apostle announced that "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," but that of Jesus Christ. By this he meant substantially the same as Jesus himself meant when he said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me;" that is, follow the example of Jesus in all unselfishness and forgiveness and mercy, in long-suffering and kindness, in purity and meekness, in honor and honesty, that the follower may be made perfect in ev-

ery good work, to do the will of God, the spirit of God working in him that which is well pleasing to God—that is, goodness as made manifest by Jesus Christ.

So it all comes to works at last. The apostle who most emphasized justification by faith says: “Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Then he tells us what he means by charity. No word in our language is sufficient to translate it. The Saviour says: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?”—must have had faith—“and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that *work iniquity*.” We may expect him to talk that way to religious persecutors; and all the more because they have given the enemy occasion to blaspheme

by committing their crimes in the name of religion.

Peter, who stood as high as any in the college of apostles, said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in *every nation* he that feareth him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with him." So Paul says: "Glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. . . . For not the hearers of the law [those who believe aright] are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [and of course no belief about it], do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness," etc. And this, he says, shall be "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Again he tells us in substance that every man shall stand before

the judgment-seat of Christ, to be judged of the *things done* in the body, according to that he *hath done*, whether good or bad. And John in his apocalyptic vision says: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." And Christ himself again says: "The hour is coming, when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth—they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation."

Yet in the face of all these, and many similar declarations, and with nothing otherwise in the Bible, you say:

According to your inspired book, according to your Christ, there is another procession, in which are the

noblest and the best, in which you will find the wondrous spirits of the world, the lovers of the human race, the teachers of their fellow-men, the greatest soldiers that ever battled for the right; and this procession of countless millions, in which you will find the most generous and the most loving of the sons and daughters of men, is moving on to the Siberia of God, the land of eternal exile, where agony becomes immortal.

And thereupon, with a humor never excelled in the cast of a boomerang, you ask:

How can you, how can any man of brain or heart, believe *this infinite lie*?

Really the men of brain and heart will be embarrassed to answer your question. If they agree with you that your utterance is an infinite lie, you may complain that "it is not often that men of brain and heart speak of the unbeliever except in tones of reproach, contempt, and hatred." And if they give the opposite answer, you are already on the record that they are infinite liars. You give us the old conundrum: "If I say I lie, do I lie or do I not?" They must answer: "If you lie, you speak the truth; and if you speak the

truth, you lie." It is a "consequence"—a thing from which there is no escape, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Yes, your judgment scene is so unlike those set forth by the Bible and by Christ that to attribute it to them—we cannot complain of your epithet.

Your quotations from the Presbyterian confession of faith may be accurate. I do not know. I do not read it any more than you read your Bible. I believe of that work of human reason as you do of the Bible: not only that it is not inspired by any good spirit, but that in part it is not true. But, while I do not see that you quote the Bible much, if at all, I observe that your representations of its teachings are utterly inaccurate. You say of Christ:

After his resurrection, why did not some one of his disciples ask him where he had been? Why did he not tell them what world he had visited? There was the opportunity to "bring life and immortality to light." And yet he was silent as the grave that he had left—speechless as the stone that angels had rolled away.

How do you know that? By what warrant

do you say he was "speechless as the stone?" You of course mean that he is so represented in the New Testament. Yet it tells us that, after his resurrection, he showed himself to his disciples "by many infallible proofs"—"being seen of them *forty days* and *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*" He was not speechless in general; nor need we presume that he spake nothing of the particular things which you mention? He is represented as being quite as able to tell of these things before his death and resurrection as after—and as doing so. Yet you ask so pathetically:

Was it not infinitely cruel to leave the world in darkness and doubt, when one word could have filled all time with hope and light?"

On this point he spake more words than one, which are recorded. And how much more he may have taught during the years of his ministry before his crucifixion, and how much during forty days after his resurrection, we may estimate from the declarations of his

apostles. Your ideas on this subject must be very vague, even childish.

You say to Dr. Field:

As you have mentioned the apostles, let me call your attention to an incident.

Then you proceed in your own way to tell a story of Ananias and Sapphira. If you tried to tell it truly, then we can never trust you as being able to tell the truth. If you did not endeavor to tell the truth, you are discredited for a darker reason. We have but one story of that transaction in the New Testament, and no allusion to it anywhere else in Scripture. There is no tradition from which you could draw your version. Nothing can justify you, therefore, in contradicting or adding to that story, in your evidently uncandid and apparently malicious version. You first represent that "the apostles, having nothing themselves, conceived the idea of having all things in common." The account has nothing of this; but represents it as a voluntary act of religious enthusiasm. They at first brought the money to the apostles for

distribution, which "was made to every man according to his need." The apostles soon declined to be burdened with this service, and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables;" and they told the people to select seven men such as they might choose, of honest report, etc., whom they might appoint over this business—saying that they themselves would give their services continually to the ministry of the word and prayer. When Ananias hypocritically pretended to have given all the price of his land, Peter tells him that he was under no obligation to sell his property at all; and after he had sold it he was not required to give all or any part of the money. "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." It was for lying hypocrisy that Peter reproved him. He made no threat of punishment; but Ananias fell down and expired. You say: "Whereupon God the

compassionate struck him dead!" And at the conclusion you say: "Certainly murder is a greater crime than mendacity." Whom do you accuse of murder—Peter or God? Suppose you were retained to defend Peter on a charge of murder in this transaction. He only reproves the man for lying and hypocrisy, and the man falls down dead. You would say it was heart disease; and at all events Peter did nothing to kill him—that Peter did no wrong at all. But is it God you accuse of murder? Well, he takes away the life of every man and woman sooner or later. It is madness to complain. You also say: "As soon as the corpse was removed, the apostles sent for his wife." Not a word of truth in that. According to the account, she came without being sent for; and seems to have spoken of the matter first—for it says, "and Peter *answered* unto her," when he told her what had occurred, and what should befall her. Peter's words would not kill her; and the "murder" every lawyer and every man of sense would say was "the act of God."

Such is a specimen of the inaccuracy of your statements and the folly of your reasoning!

But still, O prince of reasoners! what of it all? Suppose Peter robbed those people of their money, and then took their lives. Why do you find fault, when "that which happens must happen," and "that which must be has a right to be." Does the case of Ananias and Sapphira have any peculiarity about it which touches a *sympathetic* cord in your nature, more than others?

But let us speak seriously about this. Suppose the account is a fiction. Then we have the case of a pious lie prepared by presumably some hypocrite, to discourage lying and hypocrisy! Or possibly a liberal German critic may suppose some process of traditional evolution by which it got into existence without intentional fraud. This would indicate that lying and hypocrisy were held in abhorrence by these primitive Christians. But suppose the narrative of this incident is true. Then Ananias and Sapphira stand before us as simply a pair of lying hypocrites,

professing a high degree of devotion. They were struck dead—not by an apostle, but by a supernatural power. As that power has absolute authority over life and death, if the man and wife had suddenly died that day without fault or rebuke, would you be so childish as to complain of a thing the like of which so often befalls the most innocent? And if the most innocent may so fall under the hand of God or in the course of nature, why complain if the like befall the guilty? Do these victims excite your sympathy the more because of their lying hypocrisy?

You are a reasoner! Let us look at some more of your reasoning. You say:

According to your creed—according to your Bible—the same Being who made the mind of man, who fashioned every brain, and sowed within those wondrous fields the seeds of every thought and deed, inspired the Bible's every word, and gave it as a guide to all the world. *Surely the book should satisfy the brain.* And yet there are millions who do not believe the inspiration of the Scriptures.

What sort of reasoning is this? The Bible

does not teach that God "sowed within those fields the seeds of every thought and deed," and some very orthodox do not hold that it teaches the inspiration of every word; but suppose the latter were so, would it follow that "the book should satisfy the brain?" There is a boy of five or ten years of age, whose parents are, in a good sense, the authors of his brain—good brain as Ingersoll's, according to his age. His parents teach him in various ways. Does the parent's teaching have to satisfy the boy's brain? Shall that brain refuse the teaching of the parents because that boy's brain is not satisfied with it? It is because that brain does not know, and is adapted to learning, that the teaching is offered to it. The parents give that child a book. They may have made it themselves—it matters not. Is it presumable that book is not true, containing the wisdom of age, because it does not satisfy the brain of the growing child? You presume because God made a brain capable of learning, therefore it is a brain that should know all things without learning. The

book is given to teach the brain. If you should have a son who, having read your writings, should not believe them to be true, would it follow that your writings are not true? There is the father of the boy and the father of the book. Surely the book should satisfy the boy! This is your reasoning! God made man's mind, or imparted it, to learn, to investigate, and to think. And to help him to knowledge, he gives him a book in which he reveals some truths for his learning. Shall the brain of the creature reject the revelation of the Creator simply because the brain is not satisfied with it? But if some brains are not satisfied with the book, shall other brains who are satisfied with it reject the book because some are not? Some brains are in the mad-house; some brains are dull; some brains are conceited; some brains become crazed by "the oppositions of science, falsely so called;" some brains are great thinkers, but yet employ their time and powers in the careful investigation of questions of natural history, astronomy, geography, geology, mathematics,

languages, politics, architecture, engineering, law, medicine, money-making, novel-writing, and any thing else than that book which is commended to them as the revelation of God. Man's brain is not made perfect. That is just what we assert. The book, to the extent of its inspiration, if imperfect in any sense or respect, is far less so than the brain. It is because of the imperfection of the brain in its capacity and knowledge that the book is given. The gift of the book implies a recognition of the imperfection of the brain. God foresaw the imperfection of the brain, for he predestinated the same. But if there was ever an imperfection of man's brain which infinite wisdom could not foresee, it is that there should be a brain so imperfect as to think that the brains of all men must be satisfied with the revelation of God, and otherwise we are to discredit the revelation.

You have a versatile brain, which can think many ways in the same writing. On the very same page from which I have made this last quotation, you say, as before quoted: "You

must know that perfectly honest men differ on many important subjects." And you speak of "honest Democrats and sincere Republicans," as quoted above; and say further: "Educated men, presidents of colleges, cannot agree upon questions capable of solution—questions that the mind can grasp," etc. Well, then, if the reason of man is so imperfect, what argument is it against the book of God if some of these always differing brains are not satisfied with God's book? You instance Humboldt and Darwin. Did these brains differ with no other equally good brains about any thing but the book of God? There must have been some other great brains before Darwin. And yet Darwin differs with about all the great brains that went before him, concerning the matters of his own special investigations. He differs with cotemporary brains; and depend upon it, he differs with the brains which shall enter his favorite field in time to come. Natural science is about as certainly changeable from age to age as the book of God is unchangeable. Is the error or insuffi-

ciency in the book of nature, or in the brain of the investigators? Did not the same cause or Creator make the book of nature that made the brain of man? Surely, then, should not the book satisfy the brain? "Yet there are millions who do not believe" what other millions do believe about the book of nature. "Some of the greatest and best have held" for true what some of the greatest and best have held "in contempt." What do we read in your rapid writings? Words, words.

I admit there are some things (supposable) which Infinity cannot do. How could Infinite Wisdom give us a book which would satisfy the brain which thinks that "that which happens must happen," and "that which must be has a right to be," and that yet it is infamous to persecute for opinion's sake; a brain which thinks "all things have been necessarily produced," and that this must result in the justification of every individual, and yet raves about "the savagery of the Inquisition," the triumph of injustice, the torture of the loving, the destruction of the noblest, the world filled

with misery, with ignorance and want—when all these happenings must happen, have a right to happen, and are justifiable? A book which should satisfy that brain is unthinkable.

How could Infinite Wisdom make a book that would satisfy a brain which can discourse as follows:

I agree with you that the world is a mystery, not only, but that every thing in nature is equally mysterious, and that there is no way of escape from the mystery of life and death. To me, the crystallization of the snow is as mysterious as the constellations.

And then, only ten lines farther on, says:

It is impossible that man should be convinced by any evidence of the *existence* of that which he cannot in any measure comprehend.

Can that brain comprehend the mystery of life and death, of the crystallization of the snow, and the mystery of the constellations? If so, then how are these things mysteries to that brain? If not, then is it impossible for that brain to be convinced of the *existence* of that which we call life and death, and the crystallization of the snow, and the existence of the constellations? There is not even

method in the madness of that afflicted brain which is lodged in the head of Ingersoll.

I might go on, as it were without limit, quoting your self-contradictions, as well as your many inaccuracies of fact. You cannot claim the champion's belt of the intellectual prize ring, since you declined to put on the gloves with Father Lambert. And so I have no challenge for you. You fight Calvinism and confound it with the Bible. I doubt if you know the difference. Shall I quote you once more? You say to good Dr. Field:

You admit that the God of nature—that is to say, your God—is as inflexible as nature itself. Why should man worship the inflexible? Why should he kneel to the unchangeable? You say that your God “does not bend to human thought any more than to human will.”

If that is the God of the Calvinist, he is not the God of the Bible. There is a sense in which the God of the Bible is unchangeable. He is the same God, yesterday, to-day, and forever. But according to the Bible, he is a living God, who changes his *purposes* and his decrees, from time to time, according to

the exigences of the occasion. If there is any thing in all the universe which *lives* and changes not, man has not observed it or perceived it. According to the Bible, God has not made a set of universal decrees, to bind the universe and himself fast in fate. As any intelligent being, ruling over other intelligent beings, would be like to do, he fore-ordains such things as he pleases, and at such times as he pleases. So far as unintelligent nature alone is concerned, he may (for all we know) have no occasion ever to change or modify a decree. But if he has made intelligent creatures, with wills, these wills are in their very nature free. In the nature of things he could not, as we must conceive, know what these free wills may do. This assumption might be conjecture only, if he had not positively assured us of the fact in that which we accept as his revelation. The Bible often represents the purposes of God toward individuals and peoples as being changed because of the action of the free will of those creatures whom he has endowed with such will—and of his

will yielding to their prayers. To change his *purpose* of necessity implies that he did not absolutely foresee the thing which worked that change. There are many such passages—it is the whole tenor of Scripture. I will quote one passage. “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against which I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I *thought* to do unto them.” (Jer. xviii. 7, 8.) The commentator may contradict this, and say that it is “speaking after the manner of men.” One set must say that God knew from before the foundation of the world that the nation would turn, and so he would not do what he only pretended to think to do unto them. And the other set make it only in sound stronger, by putting predestination instead of foreknowledge. I am glad God does speak to us after the manner of men, so that we can understand his meaning. Though there were fatalists in the land where the Bible was writ-

ten, long before the time of Christ, and pretending to be teachers of religion; and though since the time of Christ the Church has been infested with fatalism, at least from the days of Augustine; and though on the infidel theory of the origin of the Bible, its several books were written by uninspired men no better than what we would now call the doctors of divinity—yet not one of all these writers ever tells us that God from all eternity either predestinated or foresaw “all things whatsoever shall come to pass.” Not one of them ever speaks of “the eternal now” of the Omniscient, which is not only a contradiction in its own terms, but a necessary contradiction of the fiction of the brain which those who propound this impossible idea intend to explain by it. The Bible sets before us no delusion as to the reality of our lives. It speaks of time not as a thing which seems to be, but as a thing which is—just as we are conscious of the fact. According to the Bible, we are living together and working together with God. He is as able to decree a

thing now as he ever was. He holds all his decrees in his own power. The Bible extols the knowledge of God, without ever hinting at his foreknowledge of *all things*, either from all eternity or from any date. It speaks of his foreknowledge of *some things*, just as if he did not foresee *every* thing; of his predestination of some particular thing mentioned, just as if he had not predestinated all things. And in mentioning, and emphasizing the assurance, that these particular things were predestinated and foreknown, never once does the speaker or writer add, "for God foreknows all things" or "has fore-ordained all things." Whatever may have been the individual opinions or notions of the several writers as to God's foreknowledge of all things, or fatalism, the superintending spirit in no case suffers them to put down in his word that dogma; but they tell us simply and plainly of God's changes of purpose because of some action of the volition of man.

The good men who have presumed to tamper with God's revelation, and reverse its

meaning and its express language, have done a great wrong. You quote from the confession:

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained unto everlasting death.

Yet the men who teach this acknowledge that *every word* of the following is inspired: "As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he should turn from his ways and live."

The evil effects of such presumption are well manifested in your writings. You of course have an advantage of the man who proposes to bow to Omniscience, and contradicts the utterances of the Omniscient. You make religion and God odious to our common sense, and to our conscience, by quoting such utterances. They make God a monster, by contradicting his word; and you hold up these contradictions as if they were true instead of false representations of Scripture teachings. Nor has the Arminian any more right to contradict what he accepts as God's word than

the Calvinist. That word just as plainly tells us that God is from time to time disappointed by the perverse actions of men—does not foresee them—as it tells us that he does not desire the damnation of any man, but the salvation of all men. If they cannot understand how this is consistent with the Omniscience of God, the fault is in their conception of Omniscience. They ought not to think they are capable of telling how much Omniscience should know. God cannot foresee as certain that I shall be drowned, unless it in fact is certain—on the same principle that he cannot make a rod three feet long, without two ends—because it is a contradiction. If God could, and if he in fact does, foresee every cause which shall ever be brought to operate, in the way of inducement or otherwise, on my will, yet all this would not enable him to foresee what my will in every case will do, unless my will is the servant of motives—and this last is fatalism. Put fatalism into any shape which Satan can invent—whether in the shape of universal decrees, or universal foreknowl-

edge, or the dominance of motives over will—it all comes at last to your creed of “that which happens must happen.” It gives the lie to the Almighty, who has revealed to man, in his innate sense as well as in the Bible, that there is such a thing as the contingent; that it is not in vain to pray to God; that it is not in vain to endeavor; that it is not in vain to pray to man, not in vain to exercise the will. In spite of any philosophy, in spite of any theology, every one of the doctors of philosophy and divinity believe there is such a thing as contingency. He lives, moves, and has his very being in this belief, simply because he knows it. He knows it just as he knows his own being, his will, his thoughts, his feelings. If there is no such thing as a contingency (in the most absolute sense) there is not a free thing in the universe. Without this, “that which happens must happen;” and if so, I cannot deny that “that which must be has a right to be.” Perhaps it were quite as well to say it “has a *wrong* to be.” For what difference can there

be between right and wrong? There is no right and wrong, if that which happens must happen. God may know all things; but it does not follow that he knows things which are not. If he knows a thing, that thing is, was, or certainly is to be. Assume that he knows all things which shall ever come to pass, and you are back in fatalism—the whole drama of life being a play in which the seeming players are only puppets that are played. Such is the result of universal decrees, universal foreknowledge, or fatalism.

That mental phenomenon which you and the philosophers, metaphysicians, and theologians fondly call reason, is chaos—without form and void—involved in utter darkness, and without life. God says, “Let there be light;” and the very birth of life gives light. The life gives motion, and the motion light, and God sees the light that it is good—not that it is perfect. There is better light above the firmament; but it is unseen, nor do its rays yet penetrate the heavy clouds that brood over the lower world. Such is the

light of nature, which shines in the minds and hearts of beings conscious of existence and observant of their surroundings—conscious of volition, of thought, and feeling, and with a conscience of right and wrong. The motions of life give them light. In the fullness of time the Spirit of God, which was brooding over primeval chaos while as yet all was dark, takes away the heavy clouds which have clothed the infant world in the doubt of the first, the second, and the third day; and the sun in all the glory of his great light gives day that is day indeed. And God set the moon also in the firmament of the heavens, with her cold reflected light, to mitigate the darkness of the night. “He made the stars also.” So God has been pleased to drive away the clouds which envelop the spiritual universe, and let in upon this lower world the warming, life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness, giving to man assurance of a day that is day indeed. And he has given us the Church of Christ, as a moon with her reflected light. And there are stars

which through the ages have, beyond the Church, shone on all the lands the light of heaven.

· Why so-called reason rejects the light is the mystery of mysteries. “And this is the condemnation”—this is the calamity which involves the sons of men—“that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

SECOND LETTER.

IN your first letter to Dr. Field there is a short passage which seems to have been overlooked by those who have replied to or reviewed you. Following upon the avowal that it is your object to drive fear out of the world, you ask the question:

Does it relieve mankind from fear to believe that there is some God who will help them in extremity?

I answer that such is the testimony of many thousands now living in the world around us; such is the recorded testimony of many in all the ages of which we have the record; and there are other thousands of the current time who should and would so testify, if they were not deterred from speaking to the point either by shame or some notion of propriety which induces them to hide their convictions from the public. You continue:

What evidence have they on which to found such a belief? When has God listened to the prayer of any man?

Every day and every hour, is the confident testimony of these same living witnesses. If you were to examine every member of the community under oath, you would be astonished to find how many who hide these things within their heart, must give concurrent testimony with those whom you perhaps regard as cranks.

You continue, further:

The water drowns, the cold freezes, the flood destroys, the fire burns, the bolt of heaven falls—when and where has the prayer of man been answered?

Well sir, if you, instead of the Lord Almighty, had made the worlds, and set in order the course of nature, perhaps it would be so that water would not drown, cold would not freeze, floods would never destroy, or fire burn, and no bolt of heaven would ever fall. And if all things were ordered by a like rule, the pious might be at a loss what to pray for. Unless you made some effects without causes, I am not sure there would be any piety.

What would man seek God for, if the man were without wants? For the good of others, do you say? But the others would be fully supplied with all good--where would be the call for unselfishness? Would man seek God to thank him for his goodness in granting him a being without any pain, sorrow, or want? Man would know nothing of these things; and would need a special inspiration to give him a conception of the evil for exemption from which he should give God thanks.

Have you ever considered philosophically whether pleasure is possible without pain? Hunger and thirst are pains, and without them you could have no pleasure in eating and drinking. All the cravings of your being are in the nature of pains; and your joy in their gratification is in proportion to the intensity of the craving. And however unselfish and pure the cravings may be, the same rule governs. What would life be without pains? "And desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home." This is the pathetic description of the condition of one who is about to die.

God has not taught us that he in his power and wisdom could make hills without valleys, or pleasures without pains, or joys without sorrows. I refer to this life, and am not undertaking to penetrate the mysteries of the metaphors used by inspiration concerning the future bliss or woe of a life to come. You disclose in many utterances, flashing with all the brilliant disorder of the lightnings of chaos, that you look upon pain and sorrow in this life as only evils. I confess that I am not so wise as to be able to tell what measure of pain and sorrow is best for the individual or the average man or the human race. You are fond of illustrating by the real and supposed horrors of slavery, as it lately existed in the States of the South. Well, I may say for myself that I had expressed my boy opinion in favor of gradual emancipation while living in the South more than ten years before the war of the great rebellion. Yet the fact is well known that the condition of the slave in the South was a great improvement upon the condition of the same race in Africa. Of course it was only the hu-

manity of the English and New English slave-traders which inspired them to purchase slaves from the African chiefs, bring them through the horrors of the "middle passage," and sell them to the Southern planters. Indeed, the white slaves who struggle for life in the slums of European cities and in New York this day are in a condition more deplorable than was that of the Southern slave. Turn your thunders loose upon these existing evils, now that slavery no longer continues in these States. And open your pocket as well—it is deep and well filled—open it to the starving women and children who are perishing around you.

But nothing is made perfect or of any account at all without suffering more or less, so far as we know. Of course I speak of sentient creatures. Yet the principle is so general, not to say universal, that its semblance is carried into the dead material things of nature. We plow the ground to make it bring forth fruits; we refine the gold and silver by fire; we melt and roll and hammer the iron. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain

together until now." Everywhere there is labor and groans and heavings; and these bring forth the beauty and glory and honor of the universe of God. "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Could God have made it otherwise? I do not know, but cannot perceive that he could. I do not see how he could have heroes without dangers, or fortitude without pain, or virtuous merit without possible vice and temptation to evil. But I am not wise enough to draw a line, and say how much pain and sin and sorrow God shall permit. Is God himself free from all pain, sorrow, and suffering? Of my own wisdom I cannot tell. Revelation represents him as being grieved, and as angry, and as having pleasure. Grief is painful, anger is not a happy mood, and pleasure implies its possible opposite. Some theologians say that he is of necessity infinitely happy; and if they are right, yet they give us this out of the stores of their own wisdom. I must say here

again that it is remarkable that the book of little books, written by so many different theologians at so many different times through the ages, nowhere utters this truth, if it is true, that the Almighty of necessity is supremely happy, while all his creation has sorrow as well as joy. It represents him as sympathizing with and pitying his children, as loving good and hating evil, and as working together with us for the betterment of the condition of his creation. It does not represent God as without feeling, any more than as without personal being and life. None of us can tell, as I suppose, how far God could, if he would, dispense with pain and sorrow in the best possible government of his universe. The question pertains to the "secret things which belong to the Lord our God. The things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children."

I am satisfied God did not make the universe perfect, whether he could or not; and I am not disposed to call him to account for what he has done. The disorders in the universe, moral and physical, real or supposed, do not lead me

to deny the existence of a supernatural power, ruling over all things. And so the old argument stands as well as ever. The Supreme Being has seen all the evil things which men have done, presumably with power to prevent them, and did not do so. If he ordered Israel to exterminate the Canaanites, I accept it as conclusive that it was right. Many infidels question if it is at all a blessing to live, and your own utterances look in that direction. If, then, life is not worth living, we have little cause to complain when God takes it away. If it is the liver himself who, by his misconduct, has made life undesirable, he at least may not complain if the Giver of life shall withdraw the gift which is thus abused. But God takes away the lives of all the children of men, good and bad, sooner or later; and we will not argue with him who complains of this prerogative of God. In his wisdom, God takes life at all ages. If, therefore, he had destroyed all the Canaanites by pestilence, men of sober minds would find no fault. So the only question remaining relates to the policy of his delegating

the execution of his will to the people of Israel. If God did in fact give the order, it was right for Israel to obey it; and God had as perfect a right to destroy the people by war as by pestilence. If in fact he did not so order, we may not complain of him for what he did not do, unless we complain of his inaction in not saving those whom he had a right to destroy.

But to return to your question in respect to prayer and its answers. You intimate that God does not hear and answer prayer, because when so many people prayed for the life of President Garfield his life was not saved. We may add that a great proportion of those who die are taken away in spite of the earnest prayers of pious people. God has decreed that man shall die, and cannot grant all the requests of those who pray otherwise. Men often ask for other things which are not granted. But is it therefore in vain to pray? There is the President. Many prayers are offered to him. Some he does not grant. Is it therefore in vain to ask any thing of the President?

Rev. Joseph Cook tells us that you and others once prayed Congress to repeal or modify certain laws. Congress did not grant your petition. Is it therefore in vain to petition Congress? Congress heard your prayer, and considered it—differed in opinion with you, and refused your request. Even so God heard the thousands of prayers which ascended for the life of President Garfield. No doubt he considered them. If any of these prayers were without qualification as to the propriety of the restoration of the President, God must have differed in opinion with the petitioners. But God's refusal to grant these prayers does not prove that he was indifferent to them. The refusal of your petition to Congress does not prove that your name will have no influence if signed to another petition asking some other thing.

Some of the members of Congress are tough citizens; but most of them have wives and daughters and sisters. Your petition would seem, from the report of the committee thereon, to pray for the repeal or modifi-

cation of the statutes which forbid the use of the United States mails for the circulation of obscene pictures, prints, and literature. Whether you did this in the interest of purity and liberty—of which you talk so beautifully as occasion calls—I do not know. But you stirred up a prejudice in the hearts of those members of Congress who have daughters and sisters. The slime bugs had been sending obscene pictures and literature through the mails, in a manner similar to that used for business circulars. They could not get the names of young girls from the city directories; but they would get the catalogues of female schools, and so procure the names. And then the slime bugs would send obscene prints and literature to these young girls through the mails. This was done to such an extent that some of the institutions deemed it best to cease printing catalogues. Steps were also taken to punish the violators of the law which forbids the prostitution of the postal service to the work of seduction and corruption. And thereupon it seems that you and

other perhaps equally good citizens having "honest opinions," prayed Congress to repeal or modify the law. You might have known that your petition would fire up a prejudice not exclusively puritanical in the minds of the family men in Congress, and cause them to "look upon you as a monster because of your unbelief" in those prohibitory statutes. Your excellent friend Dr. Field was not there to apologize for your idiosyncrasies. His pure heart, swelling with the charity which thinketh no evil, would have got in the lead of his head. He would have remembered "the long evening he spent at your house in Washington;" "your conversation which then and at other times interested him greatly," as he "recognized at once the elements of your power over large audiences, in your wit and dramatic talent—personating characters and imitating tones of voice and expressions of countenance." So "child-like and bland," the spirit of this learned doctor of divinity who "found with you many points of sympathy"—who "does not hesitate to say

that there are many things in which he agrees with you, in which he loves what you love and hates what you hate!" So that he has discovered that "you love truth and hate lying and hypocrisy"—that "above all you hate every form of injustice and oppression." "And yet," says he, "you do not hate oppression more than I, nor love liberty more. Nor will I admit that you have any stronger desire for that intellectual freedom, to the attainment of which you look forward as the last and greatest emancipation of mankind." Now as your petition to Congress was in the interest of the liberty of the slime bugs—to remove a puritanical restriction which hampers the full exercise of their "intellectual freedom to the attainment of which you look forward as the last and greatest emancipation of mankind"—you should have procured the signature of the cultured and gifted doctor to your prayer of the oppressed for the free use of the Government mails in the circulation of literature and works of art which priestcraft calls obscene.

But while to the pure and child-like Dr. Field all things are pure, the members of Congress are men of the world; and when the wind blows favorably they can discern to "know a hawk from a handsaw," as says the man whom you pronounce "by far the greatest of the human race." Like Shakespeare, they are somewhat "acquainted with the human heart," and they are therefore suspicious of human designs. When a lobbyist comes around with a "smile that is gentle and child-like," they suspect him of "ways that are dark, and of tricks that are vain." When the "star-eyed goddess of reform" glides in, leaning on the arm of an attorney of the whisky ring, they glance down at the pockets of the latter, to see if they are swelled with a filling of greenbacks. The members of Congress were blinded with all uncharitableness. They had become "judges of evil thoughts." They could not see how you could desire the repeal of the statutory prohibition of the use of the postal service in the clandestine circulation of obscene prints and literature among young

girls, only in the interest of that "intellectual freedom to the attainment of which you look forward as the last and greatest emancipation of mankind." They looked upon the petition of the slime bugs as the insolent prayer of a set of infidels, moved by love of money and lust; and the committee's report (on record) recommends that "the petition of Robt. G. Ingersoll and others be rejected."

Just so, some prayers offered to God may even move him to resentment. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

Yet it is not in vain to send a petition to Congress because it refused the prayer of the petition of the free-thinkers in behalf of the personal liberty of the slime bugs.

But we may come down to yet simpler and better illustrations of the nature and manner of prayers and their answers. There is the father and his children. The children ask many things of their father. Some of their requests are absolutely refused. Is it therefore in vain to ask any thing of the father?

No; for he also grants many of the children's requests. Some of the things asked for, he would have bestowed though unasked; but others he grants because they are requested of him. He is affected by importunity; and even a wise father may wisely grant in some cases that which it is not the very best to bestow, because of the importunity of the child. He may admonish the child that in his opinion it were better the request were not urged; but yet he will allow the child a measure of liberty in its choice, and so grants the request. Yet again, the father may not grant the particular prayer offered; but in tender consideration of the desires and importunities of the child, he consoles it by bestowing some other gift. It is therefore by no means in vain for the child to pray favors of its father.

If a father, for sufficient reasons, were to admonish his children to make all their desires known to him; and if, in disregard of such admonition, some of his children, in a spirit of alienation, should refrain from asking such things as they desire, this would be

good reason for the father to withhold such gifts as he might be aware that the children desired—and even such things as they might need—because of their obduracy. And he may for like reasons grant to others some things which they could well enough do without, as a reward for their faithful obedience to his law in respect to asking. This appears to my mind good sense, in respect to the prayers of children, addressed to their parents.

Now we regard the Almighty as our Father and your Father. If he has made to us the revelation which we believe he has made, that revelation enjoins upon us all, as a duty as well as a privilege, the formal presentation of our desires to God. It intends that we shall not entertain any desires or pursue any purposes, great or small, which we may not dare to lay before our heavenly Father. Here is indeed room for the “subjective operation” of prayer upon the conscience of the petitioner. Suppose the slime bugs who sent that petition to Congress had believed in the ex-

istence of a pure and holy God, and that his ear was open to their prayers, could they have had the face to beseech him to so influence the hearts and direct the minds of the members of Congress, that they would repeal the prohibitory statutes, and allow them the "personal liberty" of circulating obscene pictures and literature through the mails, to corrupt young girls in the schools? I doubt if even your own invulnerable cheek could have asked God to help you in the defense of the Star Route cases.

But does not God know what things we have need of, and what things we desire, before we ask him? Yes. But for reasons satisfactory to his wisdom, he has enjoined upon us the duty of asking. The reason I have above given is perhaps the highest, and inclusive of all others which may be suggested. It may be enlarged upon, and illustrated, and stated in different forms of thought. But after all it comes to this, that God desires his children to make their Father their most intimate confidant, to whom they shall make all

their desires and purposes known—asking his advice and assistance.

Revelation teaches plainly that there is in the universe a power (or powers) adverse to God, which seeks to draw away man from his heavenly Father. That hostile power offers to man many gifts and favors on the condition that man will worship God's adversary. It leads man up into the "exceedingly high mountain," and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And the tempter says: "All these things will I give thee—for these are delivered into my hand, and to whomsoever I will I give them. If therefore thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine." This passage in the temptation of the Federal Representative of our race—be it allegorical, or historical, or both—well presents the case. We may reverently infer that necessity is laid upon God to establish the opposite rule: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Continual approach to our Father in heaven is enjoined upon us; an approach by adoration, thanksgiving, confession,

and prayer, that we may still retain God in our knowledge, be submissive to his will, conformed to his will, made perfect in every good work to do his will, his Spirit working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ. It is by means of this approach by worship and prayer that God is able to give to man the best evidence of his own existence, "and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." I do not mean only that you find this evidence recorded in ancient books, but you find it in the writings of modern times and in the testimony of living witnesses. Nor do I find any testimony to the contrary, by witnesses who have made the test with diligent and sincere application to their Father in heaven.

Without habitual approach to God the individual man is like the boy who steals away from his father, and seeks the company of the wayward and vicious, wants "personal liberty" to eat and drink when he pleases and what he pleases, and to follow after all manner of lusts which war against the soul—to seek his bliss in

the play-ground, and not in the workshop or field of labor. He finds companions who teach him that his father is a puritanical old foggy, who dwells in "the way back," and does not keep abreast with the procession of the age. Because the man will not, and does not like to, retain God in his knowledge, God (of necessity, I think) gives him over to a reprobate mind.

In respect to evidence, men may cast doubts upon historical records of miracles and other divine things, but the miraculous answers to prayer continue with us. And the operations of his Spirit and spiritual agencies are made manifest to innumerable myriads of people whose intellectual faculties and acquirements are insufficient for the investigation of what is more commonly called the Christian evidences.

I may be permitted to express a degree of wonder that none of those who have essayed to answer your recent writings in the *North American Review*, or have furnished short notices of the controversy, have borne testimony to the fact that God hears and answers prayer. Here, as elsewhere, you find your advantage

in the fact that the men against whose teachings you direct your assaults "have left the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water."

I regularly peruse two religious weeklies of high reputation and vast circulation, conducted with much ability and learning. One is the connectional organ of a large denomination of orthodox Christians; the other is perhaps the most generally circulated Sunday-school paper in this country. Yet I find in their columns fewer accounts of God's answers to prayer than appear in the secular journals. Hungering for such intelligence, I scan the pages of these Christian papers week after week generally in vain. It is no wonder, then, since these and many others of similar character and position find little or no occasion to record instances of God's answers to prayer, that unbelievers find in this an argument against the faith which teaches that there is a God "who will help man in extremity."

Yes, and the unbeliever is not altogether

wrong in his argument. If indeed "the days of miracles are past"—that is to say, if God does not manifest in the present time, and has not in times near enough to admit of such proof as we usually rely on in respect to the facts of history, manifested his being and power miraculously—this of itself by no means sustains David Hume's superb nonsense; but it does supply a negative evidence tending to doubts that miracles ever have been wrought—of the kind generally relied on as evidences of revelation. Satan here derives his best service and support from those who wound Christ in the house of his friends—who, without a word of authority from that which they accept as the revelation of God, declare that "the days of miracles are past." Why should they be past? In the sense in which the word is more commonly used among us, miracles never were a common thing, an every-day occurrence, unless it was for some short period, comparatively speaking—as the period of the exodus, when the Mosaic dispensation was established; and the

period of the public ministry of Christ and his apostles. Count all the miracles specifically narrated in the Scriptures, from the close of the conquest of Canaan to the birth of Christ, and you will find them to scarcely average so many as a single miracle for every age. And those related as performed in the period of the exodus and conquest (exclusive of certain repeated or standing miracles like the manna), and those in the time of Christ and his apostles, would not number much more than one for each year of these periods. We are told, indeed, that many other miracles were wrought by Christ and the apostles; but they are held out as things extraordinary, not to be expected in the ordinary course of human experience. Otherwise their purpose as evidences would be in a measure frustrated.

But some of those who insist that the days of miracles are now past yet admit that they continued to be wrought by the early Christians after the days of the apostles. They can hardly deny that miracles continued for some two hundred and fifty years. There is much

evidence, such as we could expect to find under the historic circumstances, that miracles have continued from age to age, ever since the days of the apostles.

Christlieb, in his "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," takes up the subject with something like the regulation degree of hesitancy, to consider whether miracles do still occur. He concedes rather more than I would when he says that "miracles in these days have fallen into the background, *having either almost or else entirely ceased.*" Indeed, the latter clause of this sentence is inconsistent with what he proceeds to state in the context.

He gives instances which he considers well accredited, of which I will mention briefly only a part. He tells us of "Hans Egede, the first evangelical missionary to Greenland." The people, on being told by the missionary of miracles of healing, call upon him to perform the like among them. They do not see why the days of miracles should be past. And so, "with many sighs and prayers, he vent-

ures to lay his hands upon several—prays over them—and lo! he makes them whole in the name of Jesus Christ.” He tells of Spangenberg and Zeisberger, missionaries in the North American forests, and of God’s helping them “in extremity” by a miraculous draught of fishes. Tells of a man who was lame in both legs, miraculously healed, in the name of Jesus Christ, by a native Christian, at a Rhenish mission in South Africa in 1858. This incident was recent at the time when the learned German wrote his book.

Christlieb also refers to the miraculous deliverance of the band of Waldenses, in the siege of the mountain fortress of La Balsille; which, though more remote in time, he gives as well-attested history. He also speaks of the miraculous deliverance of the crew of the missionary ship “Harmony,” on the coast of Labrador. He adds: “But even apart from the history of Missions, especially in the healing of the sick, and in miraculous answers to prayer, our times offer resemblances at least to the apostolic age.” “I must only remind

you," he says, "of the humble origin and the great development of so many Christian institutions and societies, as related in the memoirs of A. H. Franke, J. Falk, Jung Stilling, J. Gossner, George Müller, of Bristol; Theodor Fliedner, L. Harms, J. Wichern, and others, *whom Spurgeon designates* 'modern workers of miracles.'"

About the time of the publication of the work of Christlieb from which I have quoted, Dr. Horace Bushnell first published his "Nature and the Supernatural," in which he devotes one chapter to the subject, under the head of "Miracles and Supernatural Gifts not Discontinued." After an able argument well worth quoting, but which cannot be repeated here in its length, the learned author proceeds as follows:

What is wanted, therefore, on this subject in order to any sufficient impression, is a full, consecutive inventory of the supernatural events, or phenomena, of the world. There is reason to suspect that many would, in that case, be greatly surprised by the commonness of the instances. Could they be collected and chronicled in their real multitude, what is now felt to be their

strangeness would quite vanish away, and possibly they would even seem to recur much as in the more ancient times of the world.

The first thing arrived at by any one who prosecutes this kind of inquiry apart from all prepossessions and saws of tradition, will certainly be that the clumsy assumption commonly held of a cessation of the original apostolic gifts, at or about some given date, is forever exploded. For as in fact they never consented to be staid or concluded by any given time, so in history they persist in running by all time, till finally the investigator, unable to set down any date after which they were not, comes into the discovery that the stream is a river, flowing continuously through all ages, and always to flow. He could not give us the wonders of Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Ireneus, Tertullian, Origen; and there declare the point of cessation to be reached. He would not come down to Cyprian or Augustine, and settle it there; or down to Paul the Hermit, and settle it there. The dreams of Huss, the prophesyings of Luther and Fox and Archbishop Usher, the ecstasies of Xavier, with innumerable other wonders and visitations of God in the saints of the Church during all the intervening ages, bridge the gulf between us and the ancient times, and bring us to a question of miracles and gifts as a question of our own day and time.

Descending now to the times we call modern—the times, for example, subsequent to the Reformation—

nothing is easier, exactly contrary to the very common impression, than to show that the same kind of prodigies are current here in the last three as in the first three centuries of the Church. Whoever has read that Christian classic, "The Scots Worthies," has followed a stream of prophecies and healings and visible judgments and specific answers to prayer and discernments of spirits, corresponding at all points with the gifts and wonders of the apostolic age. And the men who figure in these gifts and powers are the great names of the heroic age of religion in their country: Wishart, Knox, Erskine, Craig, Davidson, Simpson, Welch, Guthrie, Blair, Welwood, Cameron, Cargill, and Peden.

At a later period, on the repeal of the edict of Nantes, and in the persecutions which followed, a large body of the Protestant or Reformed disciples, called Huguenots, hunted by their pursuers, fled to the mountains of Cevennes. Some of them also escaped to England and other Protestant countries. Among these unhappy people the miraculous gifts were developed, and by them were more or less widely disseminated abroad. They had tongues and interpretations of tongues. They had healings and the discerning of spirits. They prophesied in the Spirit. Intelligent persons went out from Paris to hear, observe, and make inquiry; and these people were much discussed as "*Les Trembleurs des Cevennes*." In England they were also discussed as the "French Prophets;" and the fire they kindled in England caught

among some of the English disciples, and burned for many years.

About forty years after this appearing of the gifts among the Huguenots, a very similar development appeared among the Catholic or Jansenist population of Paris. Cures began to be wrought at the tomb of St. Médard, and particularly of persons afflicted with convulsions. And as the Jansenists were at this time under persecution at the hands of the Jesuits, and bearing witness as they believed for the truth of Christ, it is not wonderful that they began to be exercised much as the Huguenots of the Cevennes had been. They had the gifts of tongues, the discerning of spirits, and the gift of prophesying. These were called, "*Convulsionnaires de St. Médard*," because of the ecstatic state into which they seemed to be raised.

The sect of Friends, from George Fox downward, have had it as a principle to expect gifts, revelations, discernings of spirits, and indeed a complete divine movement. Thus Fox, over and above his divine revelations, wrought, as multitudes believed, works of healing in the sick. Take the following references from the index of his "Journal," as affording in the briefest form a conception of the wonders he was supposed, and supposed himself, to have wrought: "Miracles Wrought by the Power of God—The Lame Made Whole—The Diseased Restored—A Distracted Woman Healed—A Great Man Given Over by Physicians Restored—Speaks

to a Sick Man in Maryland, Who is Raised Up by the Lord's Power—Prays the Lord to Rebuke J. C.'s Infirmity, and the Lord by His Power Soon gave Him Ease."

Led on thus by Fox, the Friends have always claimed the continuance of the original gifts of the Spirit in the apostolic age; and have looked for them, we may almost say, in the ordinary course of their Christian demonstrations. We are not surprised, therefore, to find such a man of policy and incomparable shrewdness as Isaac T. Hopper believing as firmly in the prophetic gifts of his friend Arthur Howell as in those of Isaiah or Paul. This Howell was a preacher and leather currier in Philadelphia—a man of perfect integrity in all the business of life, and also a most gentle and benignant soul in all his intercourse and society with men. One Sunday morning, on his way to Germantown, he met a funeral procession; when, knowing nothing of the deceased, "it was suddenly revealed to him," so says the history, "that the occupant of the coffin before him was a woman, whose life had been saddened by the suspicion of a crime which she never committed. The impression became strong on his mind that she wished him to make certain statements at her funeral. When the customary services were finished, Arthur Howell rose and asked permission to speak. 'I did not know the deceased even by name,' said he; 'but it is given me to say that she suffered much and unjustly. Her neighbors generally suspected her of a crime that she did not commit; and

in a few weeks from this time it will be clearly made manifest that she was innocent. A few hours before her death she talked on this subject with the clergyman who attended upon her, and who is now present; and it is given me to declare the communication she made to him on that occasion.'

"He then proceeded to relate the particulars of the interview, to which the clergyman listened with evident astonishment. When the communication was finished, he said: 'I do not know who this man is, or how he obtained his information on this subject. But certain it is, that he has repeated, word for word, a conversation which I supposed was known only to myself and the deceased.' The explanation came, it is added, in exact accordance with Howell's promise."—*Bushnell*.

Bushnell, as far back as 1864, makes a remark strikingly applicable to the present day, as follows:

How many cases of definite answers to prayers, such as are reported in the cases of Stilling, Franke, and others, are brought to our knowledge every week in the year. Cases of definite premonition are reported so familiarly and circumstantially as to make a considerable item in the newspaper literature of our time.

It is just so to-day; and we may doubt if the accounts of these miracles are more care-

fully excluded from the columns of the most openly infidel papers, or from your lectures, than from a class of religious periodicals and newspapers. Their editors fear that they will bring the faith of Christ into derision by publishing well-attested facts tending to prove that the living God is still with us—and other facts, indicating that there really exists a spiritual world, which is not distant from us either in time or space. They would not have us to doubt that a certain man was “warned of God in a dream” near 1900 years ago; but if any such thing happen in the year 1888, and come so well attested as to leave no doubt of the bare facts—they may possibly tell the news, but will “leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions.” More than a hundred years ago, John Wesley was riding wearily, with his own head aching, upon a horse that was lame. Suddenly, moved by an inspiration, he says: “God can, if he will, heal at once the lameness of my horse, and ease the pain of my head.” In an instant the pain ceases, and he perceives that the beast has

ceased to limp. He puts it down in his journal—I have quoted the account from memory—but so great and pious a man adds in substance, “every man may draw his own conclusion.” The rationalist and materialist would conclude that the nervous action which seemed an inspiration cured the preacher’s headache—which is plausible. But if they insist that its magnetism also cured the horse’s leg, this is rather hard for my faith to receive. If indeed faith (without God) is so potential a factor, let us harness it up and put it to work, as we have done with the lightning.

Dr. Bushnell further states the following. Speaking of things which had occurred in London then “only a few years ago,” he continues:

There was much discussion there of the case in particular of Miss Fancourt as a case of healing. She was a cripple, reduced to a bedridden state by a curve of the spine, and the painful disorder of almost all the joints of her body. . . . A Christian friend who had been greatly interested in her behalf called one evening, when the subject of supernatural healing was dis-

- * cussed. The friend, Mr. Graves, was a believer in such gifts; but Mr. Fancourt, the father, a genuinely Christian person, was not. After a time he disappeared; and during his absence from the room Mr. Graves arose, as Miss Fancourt supposed, to take his leave. But instead of the "good-night" she expected, he commanded her to stand on her feet and walk. Forthwith she rose up, stood, walked, was clear of her pains, took on all the characters of a well person, and so continued. A great discussion was raised immediately in the public journals, and particularly between the *Morning Watch* and *Christian Observer*—in which the *Observer* took precisely the ground of Mr. Hume, as respects the credibility of miracles performed now—insisting that henceforth, since the Scripture time, "we must admit any solution rather than a miracle."

Let any man of ability to investigate the facts of the many cases of modern miracles, reported from time to time, enter upon such work in a proper truth-seeking spirit; and it will not be long till he shall become able to appreciate the following statement of Dr. Bushnell of his own experience:

Having had this question of supernatural fact upon my hands now for a number of years, in a determination also to be concluded by no mere conventionalities,

to observe, inquire, listen, and judge—I have been surprised to find how many things were coming to my knowledge and acquaintance, that most persons take it for granted are utterly incredible, except in what they call the age of miracles and apostolic gifts—that is, in the first three centuries of the Church. Indeed, they are become so familiar, after only a few years of attention so directed, and without inquiring after them, that their unfamiliar and strange look is gone. They even appear to belong more or less commonly to the Church and the general economy of the Spirit.

And thereupon the author proceeds to relate a case coming to his own knowledge—that is, upon information which he believes to be true—as follows:

As I sat by the fire, one stormy November night, in a hotel parlor in the Napa Valley of California, there came in a most venerable and benignant-looking person with his wife, taking their seats in the circle. The stranger, as I afterward learned, was Captain Yount, a man who came over into California as a trapper more than forty years ago.* Here he has lived apart from the great world and its questions, acquiring an immense landed estate, and becoming a kind of acknowledged patriarch in the country. . . . At my request he

*Now more than sixty-five years ago.

gave me his story. About six or seven years previous, in a midwinter's night, he had a dream, in which he saw what appeared to be a company of emigrants, arrested by the snows of the mountains, and perishing rapidly by cold and hunger. He noted the very cast of the scenery, marked by a huge perpendicular white rock cliff. He saw the men cutting off what appeared to be tree-tops, rising out of what appeared deep gulfs of snow. He distinguished the very features of the persons, and the look of their particular distress. He woke, profoundly impressed with the distinctness and apparent reality of his dream. At length he fell asleep, and dreamed exactly the same dream again. In the morning he could not expel it from his mind. Falling in shortly with an old hunter comrade, he told him the story; and was only the more deeply impressed by his recognizing, without hesitation, the scenery of the dream. This comrade came over the Sierra by the Carson Valley Pass, and declared that a spot in the pass answered exactly to his description. By this the unsophisticated patriarch was decided. He immediately collected a company of men with mules and blankets and all necessary provisions. The neighbors were laughing, meantime, at his credulity. "No matter," said he, "I am able to do this; and I will; for I verily believe the fact is according to my dream." The men were sent into the mountains one hundred and fifty miles distant, directly to the Carson Valley Pass. And

there they found the company in exactly the condition of the dream, and brought in the remnant alive.

A gentleman present said: "You need have no doubt of this; for we Californians all know the facts, and also the names of the families brought in, who now look on our friend as a kind of savior." These names he gave, and the places where they reside; and I found afterward that the California people were ready, everywhere, to second his testimony.

This incident is not connected, so far as disclosed, with prayer—though it is highly probable at least that persons in the number of those who were "in extremity" in that prison of mountains, snow, and ice, "cried unto the Lord in their trouble." And so this trapper and land owner of the far West, "being warned of God in a dream," sent to "save them out of their distress."

Many incidents like this one are related from time to time, published in the newspapers and in books. And yet, instead of investigating the evidence of the truth or falsity of the stories, the world of reasoners (so called) simply rejects them as idle tales; or else seeks to account for them as mere acci-

dents or coincidences. The former is uncandid, unscientific, unmanly. The latter may be fair; but generally more credulity is necessary to receive the naturalistic explanation than to recognize the supernatural character of the events.

An incident resembling the one given above by Bushnell—tending to prove supernatural communications in dreams, but having otherwise no useful character—came almost within my own knowledge a few years ago, and was published at the time in a Nashville daily newspaper. On Tuesday a well-known citizen stepped into a public place of business; and while there remarked that on the previous night he had a curious dream, which he proceeded to relate in substance as follows: “In my dream I was riding with Mr. O. on the Cumberland Mountain; and as we traveled we met Mr. M. and his son. Mr. O. on the one part and the two M.’s on the other opened fire on each other. And as I saw in my dream all three were killed.” Some one present remarked that such a thing might happen, as

these men were "at daggers' points." "But," said the dreamer, "I did not know that there was any thing between them, and cannot imagine why I should have had such a dream." And so the matter was passed over as merely a dream. It was perhaps a little remarkable that the dreamer, without any advice of a difficulty, should have had such a dream. But the marvel did not stop here. No actual tragedy had occurred up to the hour the dream was told, nor did any occur that day. But on the forenoon of the next day the parties did have a hostile meeting, with fire-arms, not on the mountain, but in the city of Knoxville, resulting in the instant death of all three. When the telegraph brought the news of the tragedy, about twenty-four hours afterward, of course the revelation of the dream was recalled.

This incident, as I have said, was at the time reported and published; and it still can be verified by the testimony of highly respectable witnesses. What does it prove? I will not insist that if it stood alone, with nothing else

like it in human experience, it would be sufficient to prove any thing. You might call it a remarkable coincidence. If similar cases were even rare, such explanation might be tolerated. But it is notorious that *these* miracles are not uncommon. One occurred in my own experience which was even frivolous in its character. And who shall say—if these revelations come from disembodied spirits—who shall say that spirits out of the body shall be always grave, and indulge in no gossipy folly? On a Saturday night, during a time of some excitement in the real estate market, I dreamed that certain speculators had purchased the property on both sides of one square of a narrow street in Nashville, for the purpose of tearing down the buildings and replacing them with fine improvements. I saw in my dream that on one side of the street this work had been done, and looked at the imposing row of stone fronts which had taken the place of the old buildings. I made some inquiry as to why they had not widened the narrow street, and was told that the lots were too shallow on that

side. This fact was the only one which my waking knowledge could have suggested to my dream. I could not recall afterward that I had ever heard a suggestion of such a speculation or enterprise, and it was one at which I should have smiled as ridiculous. The next day, after I had been to Sunday-school and church, my dream having passed out of my mind, on looking at the morning paper, to my amusement and amazement, behold! there was an account of the reported purchase, which had not in fact been made, and of the projected grand improvements, substantially as revealed in my dream, but embracing also another piece of property which my dream did not include. As for the latter part of the report, not included in the dream, there was a foundation in fact. But the dream and that part of the report which corresponded with it were never verified. The question is, How was that piece of ridiculous gossip transmitted to the mind of the dreamer (who had never thought of such a thing) probably about the time the printer was putting it in type? I

thought curiously and carefully over the matter at the time, and could recall no word, suggestion, or circumstance which could have put such a thought in my mind, either dreaming or awake. Yet I could hardly have repeated the report as published in the paper more accurately than it had been given in the dream, with the exception I have noted.

I once heard a father say to a young friend: "I wish you would see if my son is on a spree." "No; I think not," was the reply, "I saw him at such a time, and he was all right." "Yes; but I had a dream last night [of a character which he indicated], and generally when I have that kind of dream I find my son is on a spree." Afterward, the young man spoken to informed me that sure enough that father's dream indicated the truth.

These things are common, and call for scientific investigation to ascertain the psychological or spiritual causes which produce them. Who or what was it that brought the information from the pass in the mountains, one hundred and fifty miles, to the old trapper in Napa

Valley, that a company of emigrants were snow-bound and perishing? Who or what was it that came two hundred miles across mountains and rivers, from Knoxville to Nashville, and on Monday night communicated to the sleeper in the latter place the prophecy of the tragedy which should come to pass on the following Wednesday? What was it that disturbed my own quiet slumber with the nonsense about the reported speculation in real estate which was put in type that very night in a city printing-office several hundred yards from the place of my slumbers? (I should further say that I was not myself engaged in such speculations, or specially concerned about them.) If we could believe with the ancients that there are unseen spiritual agencies, which pass to and fro in the world, communicating with our embodied spirits, the explanation of these phenomena is easy enough. But this would be superstitious—quite repugnant to our sober philosophy. And so we cannot account for the wonders, and shove them aside with a smile, as old wives' fables or nursery stories.

The answers to prayer, of a character which cannot be accounted for on any other ground than that they are the responses of unseen Intelligence and Power to the requests of human beings, are quite as common as these miraculous dreams, and I think much more frequent. We do wrong to only acknowledge as answers to prayer those things which cannot be otherwise accounted for. When we ask a favor of our Father in heaven, we should expect him to grant that thing, unless there be some good reason for withholding it, just as if our request was made of our earthly father. Many persons not very pious have experience of such answers to their prayers; and both with these and those more devout these benefits are too generally "hid within the heart" of the beneficiary; and if related, it is done in a confidential way to some intimate friend. A sense of personal unworthiness sometimes helps to deter the recipient from confessing openly that God has condescended to answer a prayer in such manner as to leave no doubt of its character as an answer. But the fear of being re-

garded as superstitious, or weak-minded, or as cranks, generally co-operates with any other motives in inducing us to keep secret God's mercies.

I could wish that Mr. Gladstone had given his experience on this point. If he has passed through his long and honorable life without now being able to declare that at any time his heavenly Father has answered one of his prayers in such manner as to command his recognition of it as such answer, let him declare it. And so of the Rev. Dr. Field. And so of the other professing Christians who have written in this controversy. You make the challenge boldly. Let it not be passed over in silence. We who profess to believe that men in olden times received such answers let us speak out. Does God answer prayer now, as openly as he did in former times? Why not? And if we refrain to give our testimony when not called for, shall we also hold our peace when challenged to speak out?

That ancient psalm is canonical which sets forth various trying circumstances—including

the cases of fools and wicked persons—under which men “cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.” And the Psalmist in the chorus reproaches men for their failure to make public acknowledgment thus: “O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men! *Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people, and praise him in the seat of the elders.*” (Ps. cvii.) But you might read a religious paper for a year, and not be reminded that God answers such prayers as this Psalmist speaks of. I once reproached a good religious editor with failure in respect to taking notice of God’s answers to prayer, and he replied that every *revival* notice in his paper was a testimony to this point. And I have a book before me entitled, “The Power of Prayer;” but on perusing its contents one would almost suppose that God has nothing to do with the temporal affairs of men. Satan is always ready to help a good man to hand over all the things of this life to him. He tells him that he (Satan) is the

temporal prince of this world, while God and Christ have a spiritual jurisdiction. The psalm before quoted sets before us several classes of persons "in extremity" who find relief by crying unto Jehovah in their trouble. One class is "hungry and thirsty;" another class would seem to be prisoners, "bound in affliction and iron," their "heart brought down with labor." In describing their relief the Psalmist says the Lord "brake their bands asunder," and adds, "for he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron asunder." Another class he describes as "fools" who, because of their transgressions and iniquities, are afflicted with bodily illness, and are restored to health in answer to their own prayer. Another class is "those who go down to the sea in ships," and the storm is made a calm in answer to their prayer. And further in describing God's blessings, given, as seems from the connection, in answer to prayer, the Psalmist says: "He blesseth them also, so that they multiply greatly; *and he suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*" I admit that a revival is a better thing

than a good crop; and the conversion of a son than the birth of even the son himself, not to speak of a fine colt. But Satan wants it understood that while God is the God of revivals and of spiritual regeneration, he will not be bothered about the crops and the cattle. The preachers and religious editors do not agree to this; but the devil has got them ashamed to speak out freely on the subject, lest he should laugh at them. When they do speak out it is in a formal and determined way, as if they had braced up their courage for a desperate charge. In the book on the "Power of Prayer," after hundreds of pages of the answers of prayers for spiritual blessings, a chapter is by request contributed by the late Dr. W. S. Plummer, distinguished for ability and a happy, God-given humor, as well as piety. The first answer to prayer which he relates is the story of a poor farmer who owed some taxes and ten dollars to his merchant—of the straits to which the poor man was reduced—his wrestling in prayer, and deliverance in answer thereto. I like that. Then he tells of

a little boy whom he met with, who was working for a living, and at the same time struggling for an education, and praying every day to God for help. The boy succeeded. I like that too. God made this world for us; and he sympathizes with our efforts to make a living, to rise to respectability, and to pay our debts. And the man who goes to God daily for help in these things is not so likely to adopt Satan's methods in his affairs. Not only so, but God has promised to help him in answer to prayer.

God makes particular promises to the righteous, but he hears sinners also. We can prove this by the psalm already quoted. We do not claim to be good, or holy, or any thing more than men of like passions with our fellows, by confessing that we have called upon God in our trouble, and he has saved us out of our distresses. Dr. Bushnell repeats the story of a certain physician, who had been in straitened circumstances—that on one occasion he was without the sum of ten dollars to pay his rent. He and his wife resorted to

prayer, as seems to have been their reliance in such cases of "their extremity." The time came, and so did the creditor, but the money had not come; and the relier upon the prayer-hearing God began to feel that for once his reliance had been in vain. But before the visitor had asked for his rent, a neighbor called him out for an interview. During this short respite, a man came in whom the physician did not remember—said he owed him a fee of ten dollars for medical attention, which the doctor had forgotten—and paid it. "And so," said the physician, "when my landlord returned I had his money ready." I admit that if such incidents were very uncommon, this one might be classed as only a remarkable occurrence. But my examination of such evidence as I have been able to reach convinces me that similar incidents are of frequent occurrence. Some such have occurred in my own experience. The cases indicate that if, without relaxing diligent effort, men would more resort to such supernatural help by prayer, incidents of like kind would be more numerous.

I ought frankly to say that time and again has my unbelief or hesitating faith been surprised quite as much as was this physician, who told the story with others to Dr. Bushnell.

In respect to prayers for the sick, I will relate the following. Some ten or more years ago, I learned that a certain young man was lying very low, the only son of his mother, who was extremely anxious about his condition, and desired that I should visit him. I had no reputation as a healer of any kind, or as a man of exemplary holiness; but in her distress this poor mother desired my presence as a friend of the family. I had been the Sunday-school teacher of the young man, and called on Sunday afternoon. After a time spent in conversation, I was about to take leave, when the mother requested that I should offer prayer. Having not more than once before, if ever, performed this duty by the bedside of the sick, it was with some embarrassment that I complied, though in the presence of only two pious women and a sick

young man. Here occurred the remarkable part of my experience. As in a feeble manner I led the prayer, and asked if consistent with God's will the life of the sufferer should be spared, suddenly and unexpectedly there came upon my mind, as by inspiration, an impression which forced its utterance without any volition of mine, in these words: "And we believe that thou wilt grant our request, and raise him up." My best recollection is that the impression did not precede its utterance; but as it were I learned the full import of the impression from my own words, which were uttered with the utmost confidence and some feeling. I was myself surprised, and presently tempted to doubt. Resisting the temptation successfully, however, at the close of the prayer I at once departed with the same confidence in God's answer to our prayer. I was not expecting a miracle, however; and was surprised, on the following Saturday, to meet the young man in the market, in health, and with scarce a trace of his late illness apparent. Wondering at so

rapid a restoration from so low a state of sickness, I inquired when he began to amend. "Right away after your visit," was the reply. I had not been aware that my expression of confidence had made any unusual impression, nothing having been spoken to that effect before my departure. I learned afterward that the same inspiration was felt by the mother at the time; but if the patient was so impressed, I was not informed of the fact. But his beginning to amend was almost or quite instantaneous, and his recovery very rapid. The gentleman, who is now and has for years been a prominent educator, himself regards his sudden restoration to health on the occasion referred to, as in answer to our prayer.

Many of those who are in the habit of praying in earnest—I do not mean here *earnestly*, but in earnest—have at times extraordinary experiences which it were well to relate. They may throw upon the subject some light. I once heard Dr. Earle, the Baptist evangelist, relate a case of his own experience substantially as follows: A man who was a vic-

tim of the drink habit, desiring to reform, became a seeker of religion; and having interviews on the subject with Dr. Earle, the evangelist was much interested in the case, and was struggling "with much burden on his heart" in prayer for the man's conversion. Suddenly on one occasion when he essayed as usual to offer prayer for this person, "I found," said the doctor, "that I could have no burden on my heart on his behalf." And soon thereafter he learned that the victim had relapsed into his old habit, given up the struggle, and was again in a hopeless condition.

Another, in whose sobriety of mind and veracity I have the utmost confidence, related in my hearing the following case: He was concerned for the salvation of an intimate friend. "So much so," said he, "that I never omitted his case from any of my regular prayers. At length I wrote him a letter, appealing to him as best I could, and with tender consideration, on the subject of personal religion. My friend replied kindly, and

in such manner as should not generally be considered discouraging. He claimed to pray at times, and professed great reverence for the Lord Jesus. And though he declined my overture, one might well, from the general tone of the reply, have been encouraged at least to continue his prayers for his friend. Yet from that time the burden of the case was so gone from me that I had to watch or I would forget to mention this friend at all in my prayers; and when I did, my prayer seemed perfunctory and forced. About three weeks elapsed, and my friend was brought home one day from the race-track, sick and delirious. He had scarce a lucid interval till his death." In these two cases it would sadly seem that the men's probation was ended, and that this was the reason why the prayers of intercession on their behalf could no longer find a hearing.

On the other hand, the following occurred in my own experience: I will premise by saying that in my prayers I have not been uniformly blessed with a sense of access to

the throne of grace. Sometimes I have presented my petition with repeated and earnest importunity, with such effect, both as to inward impression and outward result, as to remind me of the sad case of King Saul, when "the Lord answered him not, neither by Urim, nor by dreams, nor by the prophets." At other times it has been as in the case of the sick young man above referred to—an assurance of the granting of the request as in answer to the prayer then offered. In the case I will now relate, there was a still different experience. Prayers were asked in a religious meeting for an eminent Christian minister who had been ill for a considerable time, with a disorder which operated very discouragingly. Not only his friends, but the patient himself more than they, seemed affected with that kind of depression which is so unfavorable a symptom of disease. Of course I undertook to pray for the sick man, as in duty bound—rather perfunctorily, but yet in earnest. But my prayer was met by an impression—not so exciting, but about as dis-

tinct as in the case of the young man—to the effect that the matter had already been presented, and determined favorably; so that it was unnecessary to further urge it. The impression was just as if I had proceeded with all due form and solemnity to present a petition to one of the departments of the government, and were promptly met with a reply: “We have already had that matter before us, and disposed of it as you are now requesting.” As often as I attempted to renew my petition, I was (according to the impression) met by the same answer; so that, as Dr. Earle would express it, I could have “no burden on my heart” in respect to the case. But on inquiry I could not hear any favorable news from the patient. He was still suffering and discouraged, so far as I could learn. This of course caused me to distrust my impression, and to return to my prayers, but only to be met with the same answer: “Yes; it is already so determined.” This continued till I dropped the case. Years have since elapsed, and the sick man has traveled around the

world in the meantime, is engaged in full work, and apparently in good health.

I have related several of the foregoing incidents because there seems in them no room for attributing the impressions made upon the minds of the persons offering the prayers to any nervous or merely subjective action. Dr. Earle had heard no news which made him unable to intercede for the man whose case had lain so heavily on his heart. The man who had been praying so constantly for his friend could really not be utterly discouraged by a polite reply to his letter of admonition. Neither of these praying men expected to meet with such a change as came over their spirits, nor were such experiences of common occurrence with them, but excited their wonder. And after they became aware of the change neither of them could divine the cause till they learned something more. In both cases the explanation was suggested by the result—namely, that they became unable further to plead because the case was disposed of by the court to which their peti-

tions were addressed. In the case of the sick young man, the vivid impression on my mind may plausibly be ascribed to nervous or spiritual reaction; but in the case of the minister --I remember no other experience like that. There was with me no excitement--no strong anxiety on the one hand, or sanguine expectation on the other. In the impression of the answer there was even that tone of calmness savoring of indifference, which we meet in worldly cases--as for instance we are stopped in the argument of a question by the court, because the mind of the court is already with us. And though unfavorable advices induce the petitioner to return to his prayers, he is still met with the same response--altogether passionless--that his prayer was already granted from before its first presentation by this particular petitioner, upon previous consideration; and though the verification is delayed for a considerable time, yet it comes.

Though this last related case may be rare in some of its particulars, yet not in its main feature. During many years of their pro-

tracted public lives, an ardent fraternal friendship subsisted between two Methodist preachers, Dr. John B. McFerrin and Bishop G. F. Pierce. In 1884 the former was lying at his home in Tennessee, at the point of death. Pierce was at home in Georgia. The death of McFerrin was announced by telegraph, and was published by the newspapers North and South, with appropriate comments. When this report first reached the bishop he remarked: "There must be some mistake. I have felt from the first that this sickness is not unto death." And entering his chamber, he continued a long while in prayer to God. It was perhaps an hour before he came forth, but he came in full assurance of faith. But now the newspapers had come from Atlanta, with fuller and confirmatory accounts of the death of his friend. "Dr. McFerrin is surely dead," said the bishop's wife: "here are the particulars." Staggered only for a brief moment, the bishop replied, with solemn emphasis: "There must be some mistake. He is not dead. *I have prayed, and got the an-*

swer." The heavenly telegram received by the bishop in his chamber was true. McFerrin recovered, and lived yet several years.

Another case: A vessel was lost on its way to Europe. There were among the passengers supposed to be lost, as most of them were, a gentleman of Philadelphia, whose family remained at home. The wife was a member of a congregation whose pastor felt it his duty to visit the lady, and to communicate to her the distressing intelligence in the most careful manner, and with such encouragement and consolation as he could impart. To the surprise of the pastor, the wife was not even alarmed. "No," said she; "he is not lost. He is saved. I have prayed for him, and received assurance of his delivery from a great peril." It transpired that this praying wife's spiritual telegram was true, and the other a mistake.

Remarkable case, does some one say? I do not know that we should cry "remarkable!" whenever God answers a prayer with an assurance that he is going to grant the petition.

It ought to be remarked upon indeed. It ought to be told, and made known so that the public shall be informed. But we should not raise a cry of wonder just because God grants a request. If the praying people would tell their experiences as they ought, they could go again with the plea of the ancient Psalmist: "Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness [beneficence] within my heart. I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation. *I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.* Withhold not thou, thy tender mercies from me, O Lord. Let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me."

I know a man who was once a slave to drink—has for many years been strictly sober—is now an evangelist. He was a *praying* drunkard. I give his experience substantially as I heard him tell it in a public meeting. He used to go down on his knees in prayer that God would enable him to refrain from drink; and before he could go from his home

to his work, he would fall again into his besetting snare. He was importunate, but still in vain. At length in very despair, on his knees, he told the Lord Jesus (as he expressed it) that he himself could do nothing—would leave it all to him. “And I rose right up from my knees,” said he, “and have never had the slightest desire for strong drink from that moment to this.”

We must depend on the veracity of this witness, only in respect to the means by which he was saved; for his former habit of inebriation, and his permanent reformation, can be proved by many witnesses. Was this cure of an inveterate drink habit—and there are many cases like it related—was it the result of nervous action? If the relief were only temporary, with a returning temptation after a time, such a suggestion would not be unreasonable. But in these cases which seem not to be uncommon, the desire for the drink is taken away from a body whose veins are still impregnated with the alcoholic virus. And science tells us that in the regular course of

nature, without the use of any medicine, the temptation returns after an interval, even if temporarily suspended. Indeed, any solution other than that which attributes the cure to supernatural agency, is in contradiction of science.

If the story of this man (and other like cases) be accepted as true, how is it less a miracle than would be the instantaneous healing of the sick in the name of the Lord Jesus? And why shall we reject the testimony of these witnesses? They are generally men of sober minds and good character. Their testimony would be received as credible in our courts, and would be relied on anywhere in respect to any thing which does not involve an admission of the possibility of a miracle. Yet one set of infidels, mostly outside the Church, insists that no miracle was ever wrought; and another set, mostly inside the Church, insists that the days of miracles are past. To these latter allow me to say that their Lord is under no greater disability to do mighty works among them than he was

in Nazareth. "And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

In collecting the above given instances of supernatural manifestations, miracles, and answers to prayer, I have had recourse (besides the instances quoted from Dr. Plummer) to only two books, neither of which is devoted to the subject. Both are written by men of great learning, of sober minds, candid investigators—by no means affected by wild enthusiasm or fanaticism. I have been disposed to investigate the questions involved as I would those in a lawsuit.

Your reading, hearing, and inquiry upon this subject must indeed have been to little purpose, Col. Ingersoll, that you should inquire with appearance of coolest confidence, in so important an argument as your letter to Dr. Field: "Does it relieve mankind of fear to believe that there is some God who will help them in extremity?" Of course you intend this question to be answered in the affirmative; for no man, be he lawyer, orator, philosopher, magazine writer, or any thing other

than an idiot, could deny that the person who really believes that some God will help him in extremity will be by such belief in some measure relieved of fear.

So you add: "What evidence have they on which to found such a belief? When has God listened to the prayer of any man?" You must mean then that the belief which does relieve from fear is without evidence to sustain it. Good sir, let me remind you again that "belief is a result." So you tell us. "It is the effect of evidence upon the mind. The scales turn in spite of him who watches." Well, then, let us say this is the reason why so many sober-minded men and women believe that God hears and answers prayer—as much so as an earthly father regards the requests of his offspring. "It is the effect of evidence upon the mind."

"When has God listened to the prayer of any man?" I could fill a volume with answers to this question without quoting from the pages of any of the many volumes in print relating to remarkable answers to prayer. *This*

is the stongest evidence of the existence of God, and that he has revealed and does reveal himself to man. This is the evidence against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. You, however, on this, as on other points, find your advantage in the unscriptural utterances and omissions to utter of those who stand in the temple of God as the teachers of his religion. Without a word of authority from their Master they boldly declare that the days of miracles are past—just as they also teach for doctrine the deductions of their own philosophical reasonings, in contradiction of the declarations of that Book which they offer as the verbally inspired word of God.

END.



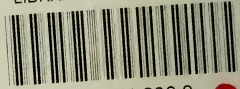
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Jan. 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 774 206 8

